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**Changing Ideological Discourse In The People's Republic of China
With Specific Reference To Rural Educational Inequity**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Education
University of Edinburgh**

2013

Abstract of thesis entitled: “Changing ideological discourse in the People’s Republic of China with specific reference to rural educational inequity”

Hok Wo Henry Yeung

Marxism, which claims to be superior to capitalism, reached China with a promise to eliminate inequity. The reality however has been problematic in that inequality persists. In terms of education, many school-age children are deprived of access. Even those who manage to attend school receive sub-quality education and less opportunity for higher education and higher paid jobs. The focus of this thesis is specifically inequity in educational provision in rural China, by locating policy thinking in discourses from 1949, with three distinct periods identified: the eras of Mao, Deng and post-Deng to the present.

This study is inspired by Freire’s humanistic vision. Althusser’s concept of “ideological state apparatus” informs the framework of the existence of complex ideological relations and a dominant ideology. The main theoretical tool employed in this study of Chinese Marxism is through a Foucauldian lens of discourse as knowledge/power nexus. By focusing on the dominant discourses constructed by the Chinese leadership, it is possible to outline the changing nature of discursive

practices which inform and legitimate educational priorities. The arguments used to justify policy priorities are both the outcome of power and a contribution to the knowledge/power of the leadership. The analysis examines the interpretation and position of Chinese Marxism in relation to the global context and the local historical and socio-political themes of Chinese society. Abbreviated as a global-local dialectic, this dynamic relationship between external and internal factors distinctively shapes political choices and priorities. This dialectic provides a more complex framework to analyse why it is that deprived Chinese communities — at least in educational terms — have been the least likely to benefit from the country's increasing wealth.

This study reveals that i) Mao's dominant discourse of proletarianism has turned education into a means of creating a proletarian culture and outlook, leaving other forms of educational inequity irrelevant to its main concern; ii) under Deng's economism, as related to China's modernisation, rural educational inequity is acknowledged but mainly in a rhetorical way and often, in practice, to the detriment of this provision; and iii) the post-Deng era is dominated by the attempt to secure social cohesion because of increasing political instability. The official solution involves a focus on "harmony" by linking Marxist and Confucian ideas into a distinct

ideological framework, which stresses values of justice and harmony, leading to a greater emphasis on addressing issues such as rural-urban educational inequity. Ideo-political adaptability in shaping policies has sustained the position of the ruling party. Educational policy as a tool, however, continues to be sub-ordinated to the national dominant discourse.

Declaration

I hereby declare that all the materials contained in this thesis are my own work during the study at the University of Edinburgh for the degree of EdD from January 2007 to December 2012.

None of the material in this thesis has been published or used for obtaining qualification in any academic institution.

Hok Wo Henry Yeung
April 2013

Acknowledgement

I wish to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Jim Crowther for his valuable guidance, advice, new ideas and support in the course of completing this thesis. His encouragement has been critical thrust to overcome the frustration encountered in the process of research.

While much appreciation is extended to Dr. Charles Anderson of the University of Edinburgh who has provided timely advices at various phases of the programme, I am thankful to Mr. Kelvin Chow of the University of Hong Kong, my comrade in life-long learning, who from time to time provides me with insights on academic research.

Taking this opportunity, I would also like to explicitly thank my wife, Wai Ping, for her love and spiritual backing.

Hok Wo Henry Yeung
April 2013

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Chapter One

Introduction

This study is about changes in ideological discourses that have broad implications for the concept of equity, with particular reference to rural educational inequity in the People's Republic of China (PRC). My interest in this issue stems from my volunteering to arrange scholarships for rural students in China and at the same time to raise awareness of people in Canada and Hong Kong of the need to support them. In the process, many donors, and non-donors alike have often asked the question: "Is compulsory education not available in China?". It is true that Chinese law and policy determine the provision of nine years of compulsory education to all school-age children, whether they dwell in the cities or rural areas. However, in reality many rural children have been unable to attend school. China is full of many interesting and complex phenomena and it is my curiosity about these that led to this journey of study which sees the lack of funding as a problem but not the underlying reason for rural educational inequity.

The initial question which prompted the writing of this thesis is as follows: why is compulsory education policy in rural China still not fully implemented? Many

school-age children have been deprived of access to education because of poverty. Even those who manage to attend school do not receive quality education because of sub-standard facilities and under-qualified teachers, leading to inequity of educational participation. The below-average educational level of rural students reveals an inequity of attainment and when combined with research which has shown that rural students have less opportunity to enter higher education and low levels of employability, we start to see the emergence of inequity of life chances.¹ While many related studies focus on funding problems and/or administrative difficulties,² this thesis takes a different approach by relating it to the reconfiguration of the PRC's ideological discourses which are, in part at least, a dialectical outcome of Marxist globalism and localism (we shall discuss this in a later part of this chapter). The starting point of inquiry however is informed by Paulo Freire's insight on the need for educators to investigate and comprehend socio-political contradictions "that serve to betray [the] vision of social justice"³ and hence requires our "learning to perceive

¹ There was TV documentary on this subject and Wan-peng Lei has highlighted this subject in his "Research on urban-rural disparity in the midst of demand on higher education" in Lei, W. (2007) *Case Research on Focal Problems of Chinese Rural Education*. Huazhong University of Science & Technology Press: Wuhan, PRC., pp.213-229. [This is in Chinese: 「我国高等教育需求中的城乡差异研究」在雷万鹏. 中国农村教育焦点问题实证研究. 华中科技大学出版社, 2007, 213-229.]

² See Tsang, M. (1994) *The financing of education in Shaanxi and Guizhou*. Report prepared for the World Bank: Washington, DC.; Tsang, M. (1994) "Costs of education in China: Issues of resource mobilization, equality, equity and efficiency." *Education Economics*. Vol.2, No. 3, pp.287-312. And Ngok, K. (2007) "Chinese Education Policy in the Context of Decentralization and Marketization: Evolution and Implications". *Asia Pacific Education Review*. Vol. 8, No.1, pp.142-157.

³ Darder, A. (2002) *Reinventing Paulo Freire: A Pedagogy of Love*. Westview Press: Oxford, U.K.. p.82

social, political, and economic contradictions; and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality.”⁴ Freire’s approach highlights the political nature of all educational activities, stressing throughout the intricate relationship that exists in all contexts between education and power, in terms of policies of the state. In reading about the development of the society of the PRC, especially the development of rural education since its inception in 1949, I have come to believe that Freire’s perspective can be applied to the study of the (in)equity of rural compulsory education in the PRC.

It can be noted that Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and his other writings are grounded in Marxist-socialist thought.⁵ Freire sees the importance of the transformative potential of human agency and hence he repudiates the overly deterministic and mechanistic theories of reproduction associated with vulgar Marxism. He argues that “many people under the Marxist banner subscribe to purely mechanistic explanations” which is also found in the PRC, especially in the early stage of the importation of Marxism to China.⁶ Freire stresses the significance of discriminatory ideologies which shape conditions of social injustice in the

⁴ Freire, P. (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Seabury Press: New York, N.Y.. p.19

⁵ Mayo, P. (1999) *Gramsci, Freire and Adult Education: Possibilities for Transformative Action*. Zen Books: London, U.K., p.15.

⁶ Freire, P. (1985) *The politics of Education*. Bergin & Garvey: Massachusetts. pp.178-179.

educational field.⁷ This research follows Freire's understanding and takes the approach of analysing the changes of the ideological and dialectical forces that shape the unfair governmental system which ultimately legitimise the (re)production of inequity.⁸ Indeed, the choice of policies the leader makes and acts upon depends on the "regime of truth" which is constructed⁹. Hence, Freire's point on the unfair official system (of education) may be seen, in the Foucauldian sense, as a "mask of truth". "Masks of truth" are not structured randomly but are arguably mandated by a particular way of thinking, namely dialectical thinking, within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) which act as an "ideological state apparatus" from the perspective of Althusser (this will be discussed further in Chapter 2).¹⁰ Although some Chinese Marxists subscribe to a mechanistic explanation of Marxism, it is argued in this study that the mandated CCP dialectical thinking allows the situational nature of Marxism to flourish; that is, the discourse of Marxism is viewed with its own specificity embedded in a particular historical socio-political context.

⁷ Darder, A. (2002) *Reinventing Paulo Freire: A Pedagogy of Love*. Westview Press: Oxford, U.K.p.17.

⁸ Apple, M. (1995) *Education and Power*. Routledge: London, U.K..

⁹ "Regime of truth" refers to the particular ways of creating discourses which function as "truth(s)" at specific historicity. See Foucault, M. (2010) "Truth and Power" in *The Foucault Reader*. Paul Rabinow (ed.) Vintage Books: New York, N.Y..

¹⁰ Althusser, L. (2008) "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)" in *On Ideology*. Verso: London, England.,pp.16-17.

This study also argues that the ideological positioning of policy and its implementation is a function of the dialectic of “globalism-localism” which represents an integral part of the official ideological thinking of the CCP in the Chinese political arena. It is not objective “truth” of the world but, in the Foucauldian sense, constitutes part of the “regime of truth” which functions to legitimate the role of the CCP as an “ideological state apparatus.”

As will be seen in the later part of this study, Chinese leaders do construct their distinctive discourses: Mao Zedong’s revolution-led proletarianism and Deng Xiaoping’s modernisation-led economism, arguably structured in “masks of truth”, betray social justice. It is only with the formulation of Hu Jintao’s harmonism that the “truth” is structured to work towards social justice and educational equity. These distinctive discourses, formulated by respective Chinese leaders, become the support through the “ideological state apparatus”, constructs “regimes of truth” framed by the dialectic of globalism-localism. By making use of Foucauldian concepts and an analysis of the various “discursive formations” at the primary stage of Chinese socialism,¹¹ educational (in)equity is seen as being linked to the various “truths” that

¹¹ Chinese communist contends that it is impossible for China to reach the communist stage in one step but has to go through various stages, the initial of which is termed the primary stage of Chinese socialism. It is estimated to last for roughly 100 years. For a detailed discussion see “Stages of

exist to affect educational discourses in different socio-political arenas in which “truths” rise and decline. Hence, the discourse of Marxism and indeed the various ideo-political discourses that constitute Marxism form the core of the objects of investigation in this study.

1.1 Purpose

The core study in this thesis is to provide an analysis, mainly from ideological and dialectical perspectives, of the reasons why compulsory education has not been able to be fully provided for school-age children, from its inception in 1985 up until the first decade of the 21st century. It is a study which investigates the ideological and dialectical drivers on educational policy changes of the PRC, focussing on the first generation leader (the Mao Zedong era) to the fourth generation leader (the Hu Jintao era) with an emphasis on the dynamics and impact on social justice (or injustice) within the socio-political context of the primary stage of Chinese socialism. An attempt to review socio-political history and educational reform establishes the overall context and content of this study. It is also divided into historical periods, according to the major milestones of education and the CCP leadership eras.

Socialism” in Misra, K. (1988) *From Post-Maoism To Post-Marxism: the erosion of official ideology in Deng’s China*. Routledge: New York, N.Y., pp.91-115.

1.2 Research Focus

In one sense it is quite logical and seemingly direct to view and define the problem of educational (in)equity entirely from an educational perspective and devise a research framework accordingly. However, in qualitative research in the field of education, and particularly in this research, Noah and Eckstein urge researchers to expand our sphere of thinking. They advocate that “what are often conceived as ‘educational’ problems have their origins outside the educational system.”¹² Following their recommendation, this study takes the opportunity of addressing a new field of research on rural educational (in)equity in China by focusing mainly on politics and ideology which is hypothesised as having significant impact on educational issues in China; instead of the narrower educational approaches taken by other scholars (which are discussed in the later part of the thesis). In this study, the problem of educational (in)equity is argued to have been part of the dialectical thinking of the political and ideological leaders of China; the focus of the thesis is therefore on the politics of policy and their changing educational implications rather than being more narrowly focused on the nature of educational provision and practice.

¹² Noah, H. and Eckstein, M. (1998) *Doing Comparative Education: Three Decades of Collaboration*. Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong: Hong Kong., p.5.

This research was not designed according to a grand plan and there was an understanding that throughout the process changes would be made as difficulties were encountered. It is about fitting together apparently isolated tasks and activities in a meaningful manner. From a Foucauldian perspective, this study is not about finding out the truth; instead it is about investigating the various “truths” that exist and transform in the Chinese political arena. Since the inception of the PRC in 1949, there have been changes in social, economic and political arenas of various complexities and contradictions. Educational reform is no exception. Over the years, the ideology of the Chinese Communist Party has shifted from initially Marxism-Leninism, on to Maoism to Dengism, to Jiang Zemin’s theory of “The Three Represents” and Hu Jintao’s harmonism and scientific developmentalism. The political reality, however, is that socialist China remains a one-party state with authority concentrated in the hands of the CCP.

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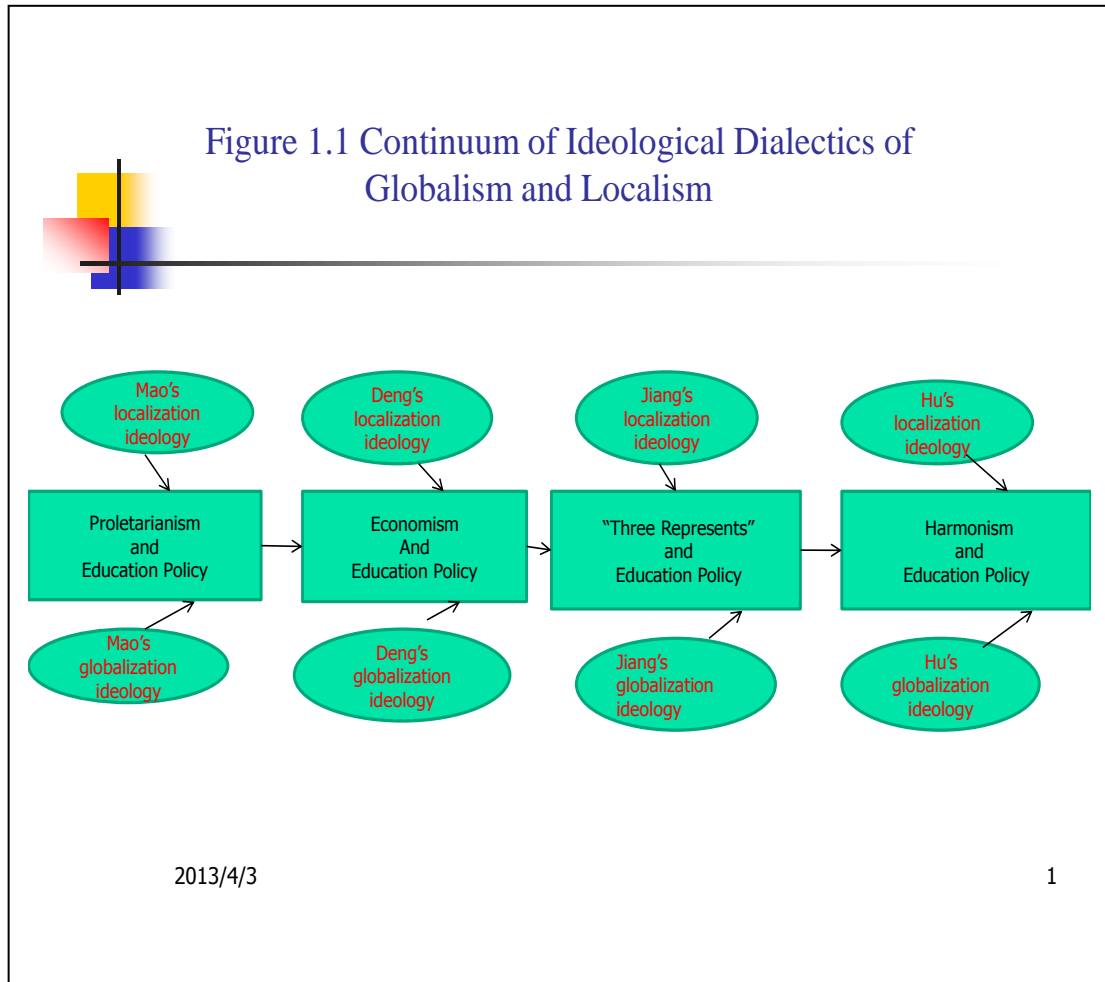
Dengism, to Jiang Zemin's theory of "The Three Represents" and Hu Jintao's harmonism and scientific developmentalism. The political reality, however, is that socialist China remains a one-party state with authority concentrated in the hands of the CCP.

In addressing the politics of education, Freire maintains that the logic of domination in society represents a combination of historical and contemporary ideological and material practices that are never completely successful, which always embody contradictions, and are constantly being fought over within asymmetrical relations of power. As will be revealed later in this study, there are dialectical dynamics that exist within specific historical contexts and ideologies which give rise to contradictions and struggles. This research starts with the building-up of a theoretical framework for the study of educational (in)equity in China, holding the understanding that "ideologies are forms of political thought that provide important direct access to comprehending the formation of political theory, its richness, varieties and subtlety."¹³ Then there is an enquiry into the education policy changes since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The hypothesis is

¹³ Freeden, M. (1996) *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, U.K., p.1.

that discriminatory ideologies, in the form of “truths”, leading to inequity of rural compulsory education are the outcome of the ideological dialectics of Marxist globalism and localism by Chinese leaders. These “truths” are represented by Mao’s revolution-led proletarianism, Deng’s modernisation-led economism and Hu’s humanist harmonism. The shifting of dialectical ventures results in different degrees of (in)equity under different leaderships.

As will be argued in chapters four, five and six, ideological adaptability and political construction of “truths” are critical for the longevity of the CCP. Each generation of CCP leadership, it is argued in this study, makes use of the ideological dialectics of Marxist globalism and localism to formulate their own discourse for survival. This forms a continuum of ideological dialectics of globalism and localism at the primary stage of Chinese socialism which can be represented by the schematics in Figure 1.1 of next page.



Notes to Figure 1.1: This diagram shows the periodization of the different dominant discourses formulated under the dialectics of globalism-localism. Dominant discourses, in the form of “truths”, are outcomes of the CCP’s particular way of thinking.

1.3 Research Questions

To reiterate, the key question in this thesis is: why is it, that after over two decades, rural compulsory education policy is still not fully implemented? With this question in mind and followed by further readings, I have come to the view that it is a matter of injustice, shaped by the dynamics of ideological transformation.

Education in fact serves different missions in the course of the country's development. Rural education is of particular interest because it relates to the issue of social (in)justice and it represents a special linkage to the politics of education—a subject I intend to pursue. It is postulated that ideo-political discourses have a great influence in determining education policy. The sub questions this study will address are as follows:

1. Why is it, that after decades of effort, problems in rural education persist?
2. What are the socio-political dynamics and tensions which relate to question 1?
3. What are the consequences of the orientation and re-orientation of ideo-political discourses on educational (in)equity in rural China?
4. How do the changing ideological dialectics of Marxist globalism and localism affect the formation of ideological discourses?

This study attempts “to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.”¹⁴ It is an attempt to answer these questions from a dialectical analysis of Marxist globalism and localism based on the understanding that in the globalisation process of Marxism, there exist the contradictory conflicts of

¹⁴ Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds) (2000) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd Edition. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA., p.3.

localisation in China,¹⁵ Additionally, the dialectics of Marxism and Confucianism are added to this study to give an understanding of the building up of the discourse of “harmonism” since the beginning of the 21st century. The continuous repositioning of the ideology of socialist China is an outcome of the dialectical thoughts of leaders, which are critical points in the discursive networks of Chinese political arenas. They are interwoven into an extensive series of relationships with which they articulate.

Marxism originates as a dialectical method in which its theory is to be substantiated by revolutionary action.¹⁶ Although there are deterministic tendencies (the stress of a logic of history as a causal process) within Marxism, it nonetheless presents a humanistic view as revealed in the Marxist concept of alienation. Marxism is understood in this study not as monolithic but capable of acquiring various forms and contents as it advances in the global arena. Marxism, as Lingard highlights, is experiencing “replacement by smaller stories and an epistemology of doubt.”¹⁷ Some Marxists, including E. Bernstein and V.I. Lenin from the West¹⁸ and Mao

¹⁵ Dirlik, A. (1994) *After the Revolution: Waking to Global Capitalism*. University Press of New England: Hanover, NH., p.26.

¹⁶ Sarup, M. (1978) *Marxism and Education*. Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, England., p.4.

¹⁷ Lingard, B. (2006) *EdD: Globalization and Educational Policy*. (lecture notes) University of Edinburgh: Scotland, U.K., p.2.

¹⁸ Ball, T. and Dagger, R. (1991) *Ideals and Ideologies: A Reader*. Harper Collins: New York, N.Y., pp.210-232.

Zedong, Deng Xiaoping and Hu Jintao from the PRC,¹⁹ have seen Marxism as relative rather than absolute, especially when it is applied to individual countries.

Marxist globalism aims for a structural change of the global order. It articulates a re-configuration of relationships of social, political and economic power in a global dimension; and undertakes to generate progress, to recognise the unity of the human race, to address the prospect of a classless society, and it provokes the venture of its inauguration.²⁰ Marxist globalism does not advance in a single dimension but interplays dialectically with the local. According to Dirlik, localism accompanies globalism.²¹ In the case of China, there is a localised version of Marxism which has been articulated since the 1930s.²² The objective is to discover the most appropriate ideo-political discourses that comprise Marxism for it to become firmly and effectively anchored in China. It is an optimisation of political rationalities with calculated risk, governance and organisational balancing of the various forces of the Chinese state. It is to display and maintain the “Chinese-ness” of the state. As Dirlik points out in his various writings, the local is a site of invention, construction and

¹⁹ This will become evident in the discussion of subsequent chapters.

²⁰ Levitas, M. (1974) *Marxist Perspectives in the Sociology of Education*. Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, England., pp.197-198.

²¹ Dirlik, A. (2000) *Postmodernity's Histories: the past as legacy and project*. Rowman & Littlefield: Lanham, Maryland., p.63.

²² Dirlik, A. (1994) *After the Revolution: Waking to Global Capitalism*. University Press of New England: Hanover, NH., p.26.

promise.²³ Marxism as a political ideology is not a single discourse but comprises various ideo-political discourses, which will become clear when this subject is discussed in chapter 2.

1.4 Methodology

The nature of the research questions determines the type of study required. To undertake this research, several disciplines were drawn upon: policy studies, history of education, comparative education, political science, economics, politics of education and Sinology. The following methods were adopted in combination:

1.4.1 Historical-Hermeneutical Method

In social science, the historical-hermeneutical method is based on the understanding and explanation of the phenomenon and ideology of the social system so as to grasp the subjective meaning and interpretation of social activities of the object of research. In educational research, it is about an inter-subjective understanding of educational contexts. From the viewpoint of research on educational phenomena, the orientation of hermeneutical

²³ Dirlik, A. (1997) *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism*. Westview Press: Boulder, Colorado., p.85 and p.102.

understanding is based on the assumption that educational phenomena are built on inter-subjective value-creative activities. “To remain true to its task, hermeneutics has now to extend its concerns beyond the faithful description and structural analysis of the text. It has to interpret, to advance hypotheses regarding the hidden meaning of the text.”²⁴ It is advisable to note that “qualitative research in general, and hermeneutics in particular, engages with linguistic uncertainty and uses linguistic techniques.....to draw conclusions about the meaning of particular social events or texts.”²⁵ Meanwhile, “.....hermeneutics, as analysis, focus their attention on the sediments of meaning and the variety of intentions that surround social, political, and educational artefacts.”²⁶

The adoption of the historical-hermeneutical method in this thesis is relevant because interpretative and hermeneutic approaches have been used in literature on ideology instead of traditional epistemology, which is preoccupied with an emphasis on certainty and objectivity.²⁷ As Freeden

²⁴ Bauman, Z. (1978) *Hermeneutics and Social Science: Approaches to Understanding*. Hutchinson and Co.: London, England., p.47

²⁵ Ezzy, D. (2002) *Qualitative Analysis: Practice and Innovation*. Routledge: London, England., p.3

²⁶ Tobin, K. and Kincheloe, J. (2006) *Doing Educational Research*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, p.129.

²⁷ Freeden, M. (1996) *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*. Oxford University

rightly says, “[t]he insights of hermeneutical approaches afford another set of perspectives on the problem of meaning.”²⁸ Hermeneutics offers a route to recognise the spectrum and flexibility of experience and understanding in our endeavour to acquire knowledge. At the same time, it points out that “the tentativeness of understanding” is linked to its historicity and “understanding is always.....interpretation.”²⁹ It aims to have a more holistic view on the issues of education and social (in)justice of the PRC through the lens of history, economics, politics, ideology and educational contexts, allowing us to understand how the orientation of educational policies has been interpreted politically since 1949. This is to be achieved by an endeavour to understand how Marxism, Mao Zedong thought and Deng Xiaoping theory have been consolidated as the core official ideology, a “truth” that marginalises educational equity. At the same time, an attempt is made to understand how the more humanistic discourse of harmonism advocated by the fourth generation leader, Hu Jintao, has transformed the official CCP ideology to one that articulates the core Marxist belief of social justice and equity, impacting on rural compulsory education. The philosophy behind this

Press: Oxford, U.K., p.47.

²⁸ Ibid., p.111.

²⁹ Ibid., p.116.

research is that one “can explore, catch glimpses, illuminate and then try to interpret bits of reality. Interpretation is as far as we can go.”³⁰

1.4.2 Historical Research Method

“Knowledge.....is historically determined. History must ‘mature’ to objective understanding.”³¹ Using an historical research approach is to employ conscientious and careful studies in reconstructing the “truth” by investigation of historical material. It carries with it a “scientific” perspective (the collection of documents and their verification) but it also has a great amount of information of a non-scientific nature (such as the interpretation of the meaning of historical events). These two characteristics are worth noting in historical research. It aims not only to understand the changing facts of educational thoughts, systems and methods, but also the interpretation of the meaning of the facts behind these, which can be considered in finding solutions to current educational problems or as a basis for planning reforms ahead. With the use of the historical research approach, this research endeavours to understand the

³⁰ Holliday, A. (2002) *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research*. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA., p.5.

³¹ Bauman, Z. (1978) *Hermeneutics and Social Science: Approaches to Understanding*. Hutchinson and Co.: London, England., p.47.

ideological orientation of education and to investigate the direction of education policies from the changing process of the PRC national ideologies, educational thoughts and policies.

This study will investigate the broad changes in compulsory education and how it is shaped by the changing discursive politics of policy. Clarification of the historical context within which the implementation of PRC compulsory education has emerged and continues to be shaped and re-shaped illustrates the ways in which explanations of events are tied into prevailing “truths” and determined by them. In this study regarding the subject area of compulsory education in rural China, it is imperative to realise and distinguish the various stages of socio-political developments in the history of the PRC under the communist regime. There is a need to identify the reform policy of compulsory education for rural areas within a particular period of time (the period under study is from 1949 to 2010 of the Primary Stage of Chinese Socialism) because “educators must place all pedagogical contexts in an historical context in order to see clearly their

genesis and development.”³² Knowledge does not come from a vacuum but “is always constructed within a historical context.”³³

1.4.3 Documentary Studies

In undertaking educational research, there is a need to find ways of comprehending both the people and the wider context around them. It is necessary to develop the connections between the personal and the social in order to make further headway in the study of social and educational development.

The following types of documents are of particular interest for this account:

- i. Speeches, articles and discussions on education from Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao. These include *The value views of Deng Xiaoping*(鄧小平的價值觀)³⁴ and *Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin on Education* (毛澤東、鄧小平、江澤民論教育).³⁵

³² Freire, P. (1985) *The Politics of Education*. Bergin & Garvey: Westport, CT., p. xxiv.

³³ Darder, A. (2002) *Reinventing Paulo Freire: a pedagogy of love*. Westview: Cumnor Hill, Oxford., p.62.

³⁴ Wang, Y. (1995) *The Value Views of Deng Xiaoping*. Shanxi People Publishing: Xian, PRC. [This is in Chinese: 王玉樑著 鄧小平的價值觀 西安：陝西人民, 1995.]

³⁵ Ministry of Education, PRC. (ed.) (2002) *Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping Jiang Zemin On Education*.

- ii. Educational magazines and journals which include *Chinese Education and Society* and *Contemporary Education*.
- iii. Official Chronicle Records on the main educational activities and features of the PRC which include: *Chronicles of Education in the People's Republic of China* (中華人民共和國教育大事記),³⁶ and *Statistic Yearbook of Chinese Enterprise*(中國教育事業統計年鑑).³⁷ Study of these allows an understanding of the educational transformation of the PRC.
- iv. Other documents consist of intellectuals' interpretations of the educational transformation of the PRC. These include *The General History of Chinese Education* (中國教育通史),³⁸ *Republic Education 50 Years* (共和國教育 50 年 1949-1999),³⁹ *A Selection of Important Documents on Educational Reform*(教育改革重要文獻選編)⁴⁰ and

Beijing University Press: Beijing, PRC. [This is in Chinese: 毛泽东邓小平江泽民论教育 / 中华人民共和国教育部, 中共中央文献研究室编. 北京: 中央文献出版社: 人民教育出版社: 北京大学出版社, 2002.]

³⁶ Jin, T. (ed.) (1995) *Chronicles of Education in the People's Republic of China*. Shandong Publishing: Jinan, PRC. [This is in Chinese: 中华人民共和国教育大事记 / 主编金铁宽; 副主编唐兴雄, 李玉非. 济南: 山东教育出版社, 1995.]

³⁷ *Educational statistics yearbook of China (from 1992)*. People's Education Publishing: Beijing, PRC. [This is in Chinese: 中國教育事業統計年鑑 北京: 人民教育出版社, 1992-]

³⁸ Mao, L. and Sen, G. (eds.) (1985) *General History of Chinese Education*. Shandong Publishing: Jinan, PRC. [This is in Chinese: 中國教育通史 / 毛禮銳, 沈灌群主編. 濟南: 山東教育出版社: 山東省新華書店發行, 1985]

³⁹ Ministry of Education, PRC. (ed.) (1999) *Republic Education 50 Year 1949-1999*. Beijing Normal University Press: Beijing, PRC. [This is in Chinese: 共和國教育 50 年: 1949-1999 / 中華人民共和國教育部編. 北京: 北京師範大學出版社, 1999.]

⁴⁰ *A Selection of Important Documents on Educational Reform. Edited in 1988*. People's Education Publishing. 1988. [This is in Chinese: 教育改革重要文獻選編 / 人民教育出版社編輯出版. 人民教育出版社: 新华书店总店科技发行所发行, 1988.]

Chinese Education: Directions and Policy Studies (中國教育的方針與政策研究).⁴¹

Policies:

- a. Educational policies from 1949 to 1966 (before the cultural revolution)
- b. Educational policies during the cultural revolution (1966-1977)
- c. Educational policies under Deng Xiaoping's leadership
- d. Educational policies under Jiang Zemin's leadership and beyond
- v. Magazines, journals and periodicals on education and educational policy. These include the *Oxford Review of Education*, *Journal of Education Policy*, and *Comparative Education*.

Reading, taking notes on the papers, periodicals and journals systematically, and making preliminary analysis allows the construction of a general picture of education in that historical period. In essence, documentary study is about collecting official and academic documents, specific books, periodicals and newspapers as well as speeches and articles of leaders of the PRC, together with literature from those

⁴¹ Zhang, J. (1992) *Chinese Education: Directions and Policy Studies*. Education Science Publishing: Beijing, PRC. [This is in Chinese: 中國教育的方針與政策研究 / 張健著. 北京: 教育科學出版社, 1992.]

Western scholars who have carried out research on the educational policy of the PRC.

The research process should not be considered as mechanical and linear, nor as a step by step, logical piece of work, but rather it is shaped and reshaped as a result of the dialogue and interaction with the documents in an on-going analysis and process of clarification of meaning and understanding. Qualitative inquiry of this type calls for a dynamic developmental approach. Change becomes an essential part of it. An innovative design requires adjustment as I learn through the process what makes sense and what does not, and as I experiment with, develop, and change the priorities. Such conditions require “a dynamic evaluation approach that is process oriented, capable of capturing and monitoring not only anticipated outcomes but also unanticipated consequences, treatment changes, and the larger context of programme implementation and development.....”⁴²

In this study, care is taken to deal with the challenges associated with research relating to socialist China which include: i) possible editing to the original wordings

⁴² Patton, M.Q. (1990) *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. Sage: Newbury Park, CA.,p.51.

of the leaders by various means, hence the possible loss of the original meaning; ii) possible differences between the edited texts and other versions which exists and; iii) the differences between various versions of Chinese texts and their English translations. The article “On The Correct Handling of the Problem of Contradictions Among the People”⁴³ (in Chinese: 关于正确处理人民内部矛盾的問題⁴⁴) would be an appropriate example. A note of a detailed description of the process of changes, additions and editing is provided in *Mao's Articles Since Inception of the State Vol. VI*.⁴⁵ Such discussion, however, is not found in other editions.

The original title of the important speech above was “How to handle Contradictions Among the People” (in Chinese: 如何处理人民内部的矛盾) made by Mao on 27th February, 1957 which constituted significant elements of Mao's theoretical basis after the inception of the PRC in 1949.⁴⁶ In this controversial

⁴³ Mao Tse-Tung (2003) “On The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among The People (February 27, 1957)” in *Selected Workss of Mao Tse-tung Vol V*. Foreign Languages Press: Peking, PRC., p.384-421.

⁴⁴ “On The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among The People” in Mao, Zedong. (1990) *Mao's Articles Since Inception of the State Vol. VI*. Central Literature Publishing: Beijing, PRC. [Original in Chinese: 「关于正确处理人民内部矛盾的問題」 建国以來毛泽东文稿第六册 中央文献出版社., 1990., p.316-360. [在注释中詳細论述修改补充的经过]].

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ “On The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among The People” In Mao, Zedong. (1990) *Mao's Articles Since Inception of the State Vol. VI*. Central Literature Publishing: Beijing, PRC. [Original in Chinese: 「关于正确处理人民内部矛盾的問題」 建国以來毛泽东文稿第六册 中央文献出版社., 1990., p.316-360. [在注释中詳細论述修改补充的经过]]. There are other versions of the same title; including: i) “On

speech, Mao proclaimed class struggle and class contradictions would continue to exist under socialism. The record of this speech was arranged into a written article and forwarded to Mao on 30th March, 1957. In the period between May 1957 and June 1957, Mao, together with his comrades, had made various editions, changes and supplementary additions.

Mao made his first change on May 7, 1957. In this first attempt, Mao changed the title to “On Correctly Handling of the Problem of Contradictions Among the People” (in Chinese it was 关于正确处理人民内部矛盾的問題) in addition to adding various comments from comrades. The change reflected Mao’s emphasis on the nature of the contradictions among the people as a problem (which he had not stressed in the original title of the speech). By making use of the wording “On Correctly Handling.....” instead of “How to handle.....”, the modification of the title highlighted that the correct and defined way of handling the problem had been found; of course the correct and defined way is the Mao’s way as depicted in the article

The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among The People” In Mao, Zedong. (1965) *Writings of Mao Zedong, Reading A*. People’s Publishing: Peking, PRC., pp.327-364. [Original in Chinese: 「关于正确处理人民内部矛盾的问题」毛泽东著作选读甲种本 北京人民出版社 1965., pp.327-364] and ii) “On The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among The People” In *Collections of Mao Zedong Writings Vol. VII*. People’s Publishing: Peking, PRC., p.204-244[Original in Chinese: 「关于正确处理人民内部矛盾的问题」毛泽东文集第七卷 北京人民出版社 1999., pp.204-244] [在讲话稿的整理过程中加进了强调阶级斗争很激烈、社会主义和资本主义之间誰胜誰负的问题还没有真正解决这些同原讲话精神不协调的论述]

(which was an edited/modified form of the original speech), the final form after various changes was published in the *People's Daily* (人民日报) on June 19, 1957. The edited version in fact placed much more emphasis on the existing and fierce class struggle and the unresolved issues of the fighting between socialism and capitalism, a tone which is not aligned with the original speech.⁴⁷ Although quite a long example the point is clear that there is a need to carefully read political and sensitive texts during the research.

In addition, researchers should also be advised to take care to acknowledge the possible different translations that occur in different English texts. For example there are two different English translations of M. E. Sharpe and New Vistas Publications. Let us firstly look at the following paragraph of M.E. Sharpe version and take note of the highlighted wordings (my highlighting):

“Recently political and ideological work has been weakened among the intellectuals and young students, and **some [erroneous] deviations have surfaced**. In the eyes of a number of people, there seems to be no necessity to be concerned about politics, the future of the homeland, or the ideals of humanity. It is as if although Marxism was all the rage for a while, it has now gone out of fashion. **In response to these circumstances**, we must now strengthen ideological and political work.....Our educational policy should

⁴⁷ “On The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among The People” In *Collections of Mao Zedong Writings Vol. VII*. People’s Publishing: Peking, PRC., p.243. [Original in Chinese: 「关于正确处理人民内部矛盾的问题」 毛泽东文集第七卷 北京人民出版社 1999., p.243.]

enable the educated to develop in all the various areas of moral education, intellectual education, as well as physical education—[so that] they can become laborers with both a socialist consciousness and culture. We must advocate [the idea of] building our country through diligence and thrift.....”⁴⁸

Secondly, we shall look at the translation of New Vistas Publications:

“Among students and intellectuals there has recently been a falling off in ideological and political work, and **some unhealthy tendencies have appeared**. Some people seem to think that there is no longer any need to concern themselves with politics or with the future of the motherland and the ideals of mankind. It seems as if Marxism, once all the rage, is currently not so much in fashion. **To counter these tendencies**, we must strengthen our ideological and political work. Both students and intellectuals should study hard. In addition to the study of their specialized subjects, they must make progress ideologically and politically, which means they should study Marxism, current events and politics.....Our educational policy must enable everyone who receives an education to develop morally, intellectually and physically and become a worker with both socialist consciousness and culture. We must spread the idea of building our country through diligence and thrift.....”⁴⁹

While it is not the purpose of this research to analyse such texts in fine detail, it is not difficult to note the difference in wordings, the tone and implication on the interpretation from different versions of English translation of the Chinese text. Bearing this in mind is helpful in the research process of maintaining consistency as

⁴⁸ Leung, J.K. and Kau, M. (ed.) (1992) “On Correctly Handling Contradictions Among the People (February 27, 1957)” in *The Writings of Mao Zedong 1949-1976 Vol. II January 1956-December 1957*. M.E. Sharpe: Armonk, N.Y., p.327-328.

⁴⁹ Mao Tse-Tung (2003) “On The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among The People (February 27, 1957)” in *Selected Articles of Mao Tse-tung*. New Vistas Publications: Delhi, India., p.71-72.

far as possible; even though total consistency may not be guaranteed.

1.5 Contribution

There is a gap in existing literature on the subject of rural educational (in)equity of the PRC. Local Chinese scholars, such as Lei, have carried out research on specific cases of geographical disparity, which is influenced by the central government as a result of economic development priority given to the coastal areas, leaving the inlands in under-privileged conditions.⁵⁰ At the same time, the Western literature is more concentrated on the micro-level of the symptoms of educational problems of deficiency in funding and administrative problems; one important example is the research by Tsang.⁵¹ The critical ideological and discursive analysis, developed through a Foucauldian lens, is clearly missing in body of literature on the subject.

This thesis contributes to an additional understanding of rural educational (in)equity in the PRC with an ideo-political analysis through the Foucauldian

⁵⁰ Lei, W. (2007) *Case Research on Focal Problems of Chinese Rural Education*. Huazhong University of Science & Technology Press: Wuhan, PRC. [This is in Chinese: 「我国高等教育需求中的城乡差异研究」在雷万鹏. 中国农村教育焦点问题实证研究. 华中科技大学出版社. 2007.]

⁵¹ See Tsang, M. (1994) *The financing of education in Shaanxi and Guizhou*. Report prepared for the World Bank: Washington, DC. And Tsang, M. (1994) “Costs of education in China: Issues of resource mobilization, equality, equity and efficiency.” *Education Economics*. Vol.2, No. 3, pp.287-312.

concepts of governmentality and “truth” construction, which is lacking in both the Chinese and Western literature, in the following manner:

- a. a Foucauldian lens provides a critical perspective on how to analyse how Chinese communist leaders have interpreted Marxist ideology, as “truths”. This perspective is critical to understanding the continuing issue of rural (in)equity,
- b. this accounts puts educational (in)equity in historical perspective, and
- c. helps us to view educational policy and its implementation as a reflection of the ideological struggle within the CCP.

Scholarly studies on (in)equity or (in)equality of rural education in socialist China are mostly related to funding problems and/or administrative difficulties. From a financial perspective, Tsang highlights “glaring inequities and inequalities.”⁵² Meantime, Rong writes from an economic developmental perspective on modernisation and compulsory education.⁵³ Yang’s work on education provides a

⁵² Tsang M. (1996) “Financial Reform of Basic Education in China”. *Economics of Education Review*. Vol.15, No.4, pp.423-444.

⁵³ Rong, X. L. (1996) “Compulsory Education and Modernisation—A Chinese Dilemma” in J. Hu, Z. Hong and E. Stavrou (eds) *In Search of A Chinese Road Toward Modernization: Economic and Educational Issues in China’s Reform Process*. The Edwin Meller Press:Lampeter,Wales., pp.245-269.

good account of the context of the inequity in rural education, however it does not aim for a socio-political analysis,⁵⁴ missing the element of the leader's way of political thinking. To my knowledge, there is no published work on the study of ideological dialectics and (in)equity of rural compulsory education relating to the reconfiguration of the PRC's ultimate belief which is hypothesised to be a dialectical outcome of globalism and localism. The closest work I have encountered is Niu's work *Policy Education and Inequalities In Communist China Since 1949* in which Niu points out: "In socialist China, educational inequalities were closely related to educational policies which were to a large degree determined by the political policies of a particular time. Changes in political policies generally resulted from changes in the ideas of certain communist leaders. That means that educational inequalities were caused by changes in the ideas of certain communist political leaders."⁵⁵ By inquiring into the ideological dialectics of Chinese leaders, this thesis contributes to an additional understanding of how Chinese leaders (Mao, Deng, Jiang and Hu) have interpreted Marxist ideology, as "truths", in the PRC. This perspective is critical to understanding the continuing issue of (in)equity in rural educational policy. It is hoped that the completion of this thesis will add to the literature on the subject area

⁵⁴ Yang, D.P. (2005) "China's Education in 2003: From Growth to Reform". *Chinese Education and Society*. Vol.38 (4) (July/August).

⁵⁵ Niu, X. (1992) *Policy Education and Inequalities In Communist China Since 1949*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America. p.3.

of ideology, equity, globalization and rural education.

Freedden has helped us to appreciate that the study of ideology can strengthen our knowledge of political discourses.⁵⁶ In the same vein, the ideological approach to studying educational (in)equity enables us to enhance our understanding of the subject from a political perspective. This is an attempt to engage a dialectical-approach study of political discourses and to connect the analysis of ideologies, as a branch of knowledge, to the study of the politics of education. This branch of knowledge will also provide an additional means of understanding Freire's work, which stresses that "education is politics". Accordingly, this study also helps to view educational policy and its implementation as a reflection of the ideological struggle of the CCP.

When discussing "History and education policy research", Ozga highlights the importance of historical context in research and opines that much educational policy research "has failed to illuminate the impact of the past on the present or the effect of

⁵⁶ Freedden, M. (1996) *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, U.K., p.2.

historically constructed frameworks for research on current enquiry.”⁵⁷ This research hopefully will provide a linkage of the past to the present.

1.6 Limitation

In carrying out an ideological analysis of this type, it is necessary to acknowledge my own engagement with the discourse in its epistemology and ontology which means it is not absolutely objective and impartial; that is, it is also a discourse-laden exercise. My role as a researcher plays an important part in formulating and shaping the outcome of this study, that is, the existence of a “researcher effect”.

No claim is made here that this is a comprehensive study of the history of educational (in)equity of the PRC. Its focus instead is on the impact of educational (in)equity via the transformation of ideo-political discourses. A periodization by the leaderships of the PRC shapes the overall time-dimension of this research.

The limitations of a historical study such as this are manifested in the difficulty

⁵⁷ Ozga, J. (2000) *Policy research in educational settings: contested terrain*. Open University Press: Buckingham, U.K., p.116.

in the collection and verification of data and information from an environment known for its restriction of information. While this is generally the case up to the end of Cultural Revolution, Chinese sources were not as scarce at the time when this study was being conducted. While accessibility of material has not been a big problem (I have had the privilege of sourcing materials from libraries in Edinburgh, Toronto and Hong Kong), their usefulness may be quite limited since it is quite difficult to differentiate between official policy declarations and mere ideological justifications, or even particular idiosyncrasies. The articles and speeches of the leaders, official chronicle records, policy documents and even published journals are “edited” versions which may not represent the “original”. In other words, it is possible that official “knowledge” and “truth” may have been incorporated into them, bearing in mind that the publication of official chronicles, speeches and writings of leaders, as well as policy statements and related interpretations, are in the hands of the CCP—an “ideological state apparatus” which functions to shape the masses’ thinking via various means. Nevertheless, the official policy statements and documents, taken at face value, have been a useful point of entry for this study because they form a central source of references to other materials.

The limitations of official statements may appear to be inevitable. These limitations however can be somewhat minimised by supplementing them with secondary materials such as press reports, commentaries and academic books and articles which help to cross-validate various sources of information. Although by no means flawless, the use of critical analysis of documentary data to identify interpretation, edition, reification, falsification, or even biases is a useful skill in securing the credibility of the available information or viewpoints. As Pitt maintains, doubtful sources may still be useful “since falsification may deal with events or things which, because they are necessary to hide or distort, have some social and political significance.”⁵⁸ In general, official publications (such as selected works of Mao, Deng and Jiang and their respective published articles) may be considered as sources of information from the “inside” which, if the problems of interpretation and authentication can be overcome, may still be very useful.

Many of the secondary-source materials encountered are somewhat fragmentary, but nonetheless they reveal reasonable consistency and therefore, after careful consideration have been utilised with reasonable confidence. Some published

⁵⁸ Pitt, D. (1972) *Using Historical Sources in Anthropology and Sociology*. Holt, Rinehart & Winston: New York, N.Y., p.55.

statistics have been used but making use of them presents a frustrating experience.

The reality is that statistics provided by Chinese officials or published in official documents may vary considerably, often from one source to another. After all, statistical analysis, when not used in an in-depth way, often fails to capture the dynamics of human interaction.

On a personal basis, I have encountered difficulties because firstly many of the Chinese original materials are in simplified Chinese characters and secondly they are inevitably written in the official Chinese communist format and language which presents a difficulty for me with reading traditional Chinese characters (the complicated form) as I was brought up in Hong Kong with a non-communist form of the language. Although I have managed to grasp the essences and the essential context of the matter, I have finally decided to support much of the study, with materials in English and non-communist Chinese literatures available in Edinburgh, Hong Kong and Canada.

1.7 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is organised in the following manner:

Chapter 1 provides an introduction, including the purpose, research focus, research questions, methodology, and academic contribution of the work.

Chapter 2 draws on the theoretical framework of the research. A theoretical framework in the study of educational inequity/injustice in the People's Republic of China is built up in the thesis, holding the understanding that ideologies are sets of political discourses and concepts. It starts with a review of the development of ideology including Marx's perspective of ideology and then introduces Althusser's theory of ideology to inform the thesis of the possibility of understanding the world outside the traditional Marxist conception of ideology. The discussion of Freire's concepts of the existence of discriminatory ideologies in political, social, economic and education policies then allows the thesis another basis to argue from, grounding the study in an educational perspective. The framework then goes on to establish the action-orientation character of ideology and its importance in Chinese society and its political arena. Ideology is understood not only as "an instrument of social control or a form of linguistic expression", its role on the "normative and methodological levels" is also recognised and is used to analyse changes within political and social arenas.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Sun, Y. (1995) "Ideology and the Demise or Maintenance of Soviet-type Regimes: Perspectives on the Chinese Case". *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*. Vol. 28, No.3, p.321.

This thesis attempts to utilize scholarly theories to examine the role of ideology and discourse, under the interaction and dialectics of globalism and localism as well as the fusion of the dialectics of Marxism and Confucianism, in the social and political construction of reality. The theoretical framework of this thesis draws on Foucault and the insight of Freire to reveal the impact of policy discourse on social and political reality and how social and political contexts shape the policy discourse.

Chapter 3 attempts to establish the case of rural educational inequity in China. Before a case of education inequity is established, an attempt is made to link up the similarities of (in)equity, (in)equality and (in)justice while maintaining their differentiation. The main idea employed in this thesis is that equity is a normative concept carrying a value-laden judgment. The social and political nature of equity is recognised as a core feature of political ideology, having the power to legitimise public policies. Equity is in fact a supportive ideology within major political ideologies.

Educational equity is viewed from four perspectives, namely: i) access, ii)

participation, iii) attainment and iv) life chances. I have drawn an overall picture of the PRC's educational inequity, which is dominated by the urban-rural divide. It is further argued that there are repeated repositioning of priorities of social and political agenda and objectives which impact educational (in)equity.

Chapter 4 starts with a depiction of educational inequity and associated ambivalence. A construction of the Marxist dialectics of globalism and localism then follows. Globalism and localism are associated together to form a dialectical unity. It is followed by an argument that ideological dialectics of globalism and localism play a critical role in determining the political discourses of Maoism and as a result have an influence on educational (in)equity in the era of Mao Zedong. The ideo-dialectical venture of Mao Zedong transformed Euro-centric Marxism into a Sino-centric version of Marxism. As the Chinese Communist Party possessed absolute authority and the educational system was framed as a sub-structure of politics, Mao's initiatives penetrated every kind of educational endeavour and the impact on educational (in)equity was immense. The aim of Maoist education was not the imparting of knowledge but the moulding of a red proletariat of a revolutionary nature for the whole nation. Equity of educational provision was not realised in

schooling but was reflected in ensuring everyone learned the new Maoist Communism.

Chapter 5 reveals the on-going rural educational inequity. The importance of using ideo-dialectical perspectives in understanding China in Deng Xiaoping's era is stressed. While some scholars have argued that Deng's open policies resulted in de-ideologisation, this chapter argues that Deng and his team of communist leaders continued to employ ideological dialectics of globalism and localism in the political arena. Communist ideology continued to guide and justify policy changes leading to another form of educational (in)equity. Compulsory educational inequity in rural China was structurally legitimised by reference to a variety of ideological discourses which attempted to explain the necessity and legitimacy of the forms of inequity.

Chapter 6 allows us to understand the formulation of the revitalised ideological discourses of harmonism and scientific developmentalism in order to counteract the emerging political instability. Humanism has been configured as the CCP political and social concepts within Chinese Marxism in the Hu Jintao era since the beginning of the 21st century. The ideo-dialectical endeavour of Hu Jintao has enabled the

regime to comprehend the relationship and change in the complex and diverse world to discover the correlations between the ancient Chinese Confucian political discourses and the advocates of Marxism, trying to link the Marxist “truth” with that of the Chinese. By recognising social equity as a fundamental discourse, Hu’s regime is able to adhere to the core tenets of Marxism and to take necessary measures to minimise inequity of rural compulsory education.

Chapter 7 draws the conclusion that the ideological dialectics of Marxist globalism and localism have successfully shaped the core ideologies of the various phases of the primary stage of Chinese socialism. Chinese leaders have employed this ideo-dialectical endeavour in executing their leadership in politics. Discourses or concepts within an ideology are, by their disposition, re-configured or re-directed under particular political or social circumstances. As perceptions of reality are framed within particular discourse regimes, changes in rural educational (in)equity are immensely influenced by the ideological orientation of the leaders.

With this, we shall proceed to the construction of a theoretical framework for this study in Chapter 2.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework

Ideologies, particularly dominant political ideologies, shape socio-political conditions. The fundamental consideration here is not the philosophical sophistication or definition of the term “Ideology” but to build up a theoretical framework in the study of educational (in)equity in China, holding the understanding that “ideologies are forms of political thought that provide important direct access to comprehending the formation of political theory, its richness, varieties and subtlety.”⁶⁰ To understand Communist China, it is not enough to study and view Marxism as an ideology but also to appreciate the method within it. Ollman highlights the importance of Marx’s method of dialectics and reminds us of George Lukas’ view that orthodox Marxism does not signify an uncritical acknowledgement of the findings of Marx’s investigations. In other words, one needs to extend a critical stance and take a holistic approach to Marx’s ideas. Marxism is not exegesis of a set of holy books; it provides a method (dialectics) and praxis (class struggle).⁶¹ The method shapes the conceptualisation of discourse through an inquiry structured in a particular way of knowing the “truth”. This inquiry materialises as a form of

⁶⁰ Freeden, M. (1996) *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, England. p.1.

⁶¹ Ollman, B. (1993) *Dialectical Investigations*. Routledge: New York, N.Y., p.v and p.9.

knowledge, a political form that turns into a way of authenticating “truth”, a form of power/knowledge from a Foucauldian perspective which shall be discussed later in this chapter.

Drawing on Harvey’s advocacy, that critical social research should not be limited by any one single theoretical perspective,⁶² this study is structured with a theoretical framework from both ideological and dialectical perspectives. Dialectics comes from the Greek word *dialego*, meaning to discuss or to exchange ideas. It originated from ancient Greek philosophers as a method of “disclosing contradictions in the opinions of opponents and overcoming these contradictions, of jointly examining concepts in order to arrive at the truth.”⁶³ Niu argues that, in China, changes in political policies generally resulted from changes in the ideas of certain communist leaders.⁶⁴ By employing a theoretical framework with the ideological and dialectical perspectives of analysis commonly used by Communist Chinese leaders, we would be in a better position to grasp and comprehend their thinking and gain more insight into their policies.

⁶² Harvey, L. (1990) *Critical Social Research*. Allen and Unwin: London, England., p.8.

⁶³ Dickhut, W. (2002) *The Dialectical Method in the Working-Class Movement. The Dialectical Unity of Theory and Practice (English Edition)*. VerlagNeuerWeg: Essen, Germany., p.13.

⁶⁴ Niu, X. (1992) *Policy Education and Inequalities: In Communist China Since 1949*. University Press of America: Lanham, Maryland.

2.1 Ideology: A Multi-valent Development

Ideology is a very complex concept that carries many, often ambiguous, meanings. It is generally agreed that the term “ideology” was first introduced in revolutionary France at the end of the 18th century. The French encyclopaedist, Anthoine Louis Claude Destutt de Tracy, saw the need for a “Newton of the science of thought” and attempted to formulate an approach to the rational study of ideas that he called ideology.⁶⁵ As Eagleton puts it, “the notion of ideology was.....brought to birth in thoroughly ideological conditions.”⁶⁶ De Tracy tried to formulate a science of ideas that would enable him to objectively distinguish the false ideas of his time. He initiated the concept that simple physical sensations form the building blocks for all ideas. What he was trying to do, bringing in positive meanings for the concept “ideology”, was to discover the law that governs human thought. Through the reconstruction of the origin of ideas, he attempted to establish a basis for a rational and just society. The use of ideology in a more negative sense, however, started when Napoleon suppressed de Tracy by labelling him and his followers “ideologues”, associating ideology with a set of false ideas. Thus, starting from the infancy of the term, ideology carries with it two conflicting meanings. On the positive side it is a

⁶⁵ Eccleshall, R. *et al.* (2003) *Political Ideologies: an introduction*. Routledge: London, U.K., pp.3-4.

⁶⁶ Eagleton, T. (1991) *Ideology: An Introduction*. Verso: London, England., p.66.

“science of ideas” while on the negative side it is a set of illusionary false ideas, “a hazy metaphysics of no benefit to anyone.”⁶⁷ For Karl Mannheim, the word “ideology” originally signifies only the theory of ideas and carries “no inherent ontological significance.”⁶⁸ In politics, ideology is used as a weapon to work against opponents. In Mannheim’s view, “as soon as all parties are able to analyse the ideas of their opponents in ideological terms, all elements of meaning are qualitatively changed and the word ideology acquires a totally new meaning.”⁶⁹ It is with the understanding of the organic, transformational and innovative nature of ideology that this study is carried out.

2.1.1 Ideology: Marx’s Perspective

Marx invests the concept of ideology with a specific political meaning and relates ideology to capitalism and its material contradictions. He views ideology as “false consciousness”, a distortion of reality in the interest of the ruling class. From a materialist perspective, Marx attempts to formulate a scientific account of the generation of ideas based on material factors, more precisely, by historical and social

⁶⁷ Festenstein, M. and Michael, K. (eds.) (2005) *Political Ideologies: A Reader and Guide*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, England., p.7.

⁶⁸ Mannheim, K. (1939) *Ideology and Utopia Collected Works of Karl Mannheim. Vol.1* (reprinted 2002). Routledge: London, England., p.63.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p.68.

circumstances. While he does not put forward a systematic and explicit discussion of the theory of ideology in a single volume, we may still appreciate one of his initial discussions of the theory of ideology in his co-authored work with Engels, *The Germany Ideology* (written between 1845 and 1846) :

“Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc.—real active men, as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest forms. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is their actual life-process. If in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a *camera-obscura*, this phenomenon arises just as much from their historical life process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process.”⁷⁰

Marx sees the role of changing historical conditions as fundamental to the formation of ideas. The innovative nature of his interpretation is based on the way he links ideas to the actual life experience of human beings. In his materialist dialectics, it is in the real world of material relations that ideas come into being. In *The German Ideology*, Marx attempts to figure out why a particular thinker views his/her subject matter from a particular standpoint, why he/she makes specific assumptions or maintains certain ideas as self-evident and obvious. He explains that the answer is

⁷⁰ Marx, K. and Engels, F. (1991) *The German Ideology (Student Edition)*. ed. Arthur, C.J.. Lawrence and Wishart: London, England., p.47.

often discovered by tracing the political and social background of the thinker, by showing that a certain way of looking at this subject matter comes naturally to a person belonging to a particular group.

Ideology, to Marx, is “a body of thought systematically biased towards a certain group of people.”⁷¹ This body of thought represents “a systematically biased and distorted account of the subject matter.”⁷² Marx views ideology as an instrument of oppression by the ruling bourgeoisie, which functions to deceive the subordinate proletariat. Ideology, indeed, is “a sheer reactionary force, a naked instrument fabricated by the rulers to serve their interests. It is also the false consciousness of the oppressed class which seeks satisfaction in it.”⁷³

In theorising the possibility of removing the ideological framework of society, Marx comments on the necessity of removing the contradictions of particular class interest within the socio-political and economic realms. Ideology is “insurmountable in class societies” and theoretical reason alone is unable to resolve the problem of

⁷¹ Parekh, B. (1982) *Marx's Theory of Ideology*. Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, Maryland., p. 44.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Tran, V.D. (2002) *The Poverty of Ideology Education*. The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy: Washington, D.C., p.2.

ideology.⁷⁴ As Marx maintains that the real source of false ideas comes from the oppression of the ruling class and is to be found in the actual life experience of human beings, his theory implies that false ideas can only be overthrown by revolutionary action in the real world. Overcoming real material contradictions in the class structure of society would inevitably lead, he argues, to the coming into consciousness of true understanding. A classless society would be devoid of ideology. The Marxist concept of ideology is rather narrowly concentrated on “the domination and control aspects of ideology at the expense of other features and functions.”⁷⁵

2.1.2 Ideology: A Conception transformed by Louis Althusser

Althusser’s crucial understanding of ideology is relational in that ideology signifies the imaginary relationship of people to the real conditions of their existence. His theory of ideology informs this thesis of the possibility of understanding the world outside the classical Marxist conception. Althusser, a French Marxist philosopher, offers an argument against the traditional view of the relationship between ideology and truth. He views ideology as having a cementing ability, to bind human societies together. Althusser rejects the metaphor of the *camera obscura* in

⁷⁴ Meszaros, I. (1989) *The Power of Ideology*. Harvester Wheatsheaf: London, England, p.10-11.

⁷⁵ Freedon, M. (1996) *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, England. p.15.

The German Ideology. To him, it does not make sense to talk of an ideology being true or false: “ideology is.....an organic part.....of every social totality.”⁷⁶ It is “a system.....of representations.....endowed with a historical existence and role within a given society.”⁷⁷ Ideology exists as an indispensable framework for social actions. Ideology is viewed by Althusser not as “an aberration or a contingent excrescence of History”, but as “a structure essential to the historical life of societies.”⁷⁸ It is “both an ‘imaginary’ representation of the real and a ‘lived’ relation between individuals and their conditions of existence.”⁷⁹ As shall be argued later in this chapter, the relationship of “imaginary” and reality, as well as that of the individual and condition of existence, is dialectical in nature.

In contrast to Marx’s linking of ideology to “consciousness”, Althusser says “ideology has very little to do with ‘consciousness’” but has itself a material existence,⁸⁰ a reality, which occurs through “Ideological State Apparatuses” (ISAs) which include institutions like schools, churches, political parties and trade unions.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Althusser, L. (1996) “Marxism and Humanism” in *For Marx*. trans. Ben Brewster. Verso: London., p.232.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.231.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p.232.

⁷⁹ Freedman, M. (1996) *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, England., p.19.

⁸⁰ Althusser, L. (1996) “Marxism and Humanism” in *For Marx*. trans. Ben Brewster. Verso: London, England., p.233.

⁸¹ Althusser, L. (2008) “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)” in *On Ideology*. Verso: London, England., pp.16-17.

“Ideological state apparatus” is different from state apparatus such as the government, the police or the army. While state apparatus may make use of force (in Althusser’s term—“functions by violence”), “ideological state apparatus” functions by ideology.⁸² He emphasises that any political party which is incapable of mastering ISAs would not be able to hold on to power for the long term. Ideology is “*structures.....[imposed]* on the vast majority of men” and is “a matter of the lived relation between men and their world.”⁸³ Althusser also sees that ideology provides people with a sense of identity, making people into “subjects” so that social action may be organised according to ideological orientation. This identity facilitates the construction of a kind of social being that is shaped “into the proper social form—to exist as a fabricated citizen.”⁸⁴ At the same time, by locating the individual in a framework which allows one to have an identity in the world, in which there is a position for one, a promise is offered that if one complies with the rules of the game, one will do well.⁸⁵ By arguing in this way, members of the CCP gain a sense of identity, being Marxist allows them to become “subjects”. Althusser, in his discussion of ISAs, has demonstrated that the existence of ideology is a material one,

⁸² Ibid., pp.17-19.

⁸³ Althusser, L. (1996) “Marxism and Humanism” in *For Marx*. trans. Ben Brewster. Verso: London, England., p.233.

⁸⁴ Rademacher, L. (2002) *Structuralism Vs. Humanism in the Formation of the Political Self: The Philosophy of Politics of Jean-Paul Sartre and Louis Althusser*. The Edwin Mellen Press: Lampeter, U.K., p.3.

⁸⁵ Callinicos, A. (1976) *Althusser’s Marxism*. Pluto Press: London, U.K., p.66.

vested in a variety of apparatuses and their associated practices. This enables us to see that, in the PRC, the life of Marxism, or rather of Chinese Marxism, is a material one vested in the CCP and its associated practices. Practices and ideological discourses form a loop (Althusser actually uses the term “ideologies”; however, I believe for analytical purposes, it is clearer to use the term ideo-political discourses); that is, the foundation that practices establish for themselves is located in the accompanying discourses and ideas that are ideological and political in nature, while the accompanying discourses and ideas are nothing without those practices. Through this, Althusser offers an example of how critique (in the form of discourses and ideas) transforms people’s understanding of socio-political conditions and of the socio-political transformation itself.

In his view, ideology shapes social beings as specific subjects via an “interpellation” process, which is the process whereby the subject, the social being, is recognised through ideology. Here Althusser complicates his position by insisting that the process of “interpellation” is not governed by cause and effect, but occurs simultaneously; that is, subject-hood, ideology and interpellation reinforce each other mutually. There are two features of ideology that are worth noting for the purposes of

this thesis: ideology operates through many diverse ideo-political discourses that produce a multitude of different subject positions and the reality of these discourses is pluralistic.

In essence, for Althusser, what he terms the “practico-social function” of ideology, the bonding function within societies, is more important than its “theoretical function”, its function as knowledge.⁸⁶ (We shall see later that Foucault enhances Althusser’s theory). Furthermore, Althusser’s theory of ideology informs this study in that, if ideology is to maintain its relevance in understanding the world, in “the analysis of history and of the political” and the understanding of “their inner dynamic,”⁸⁷ we must view its function outside the sphere of the traditional Marxist conception.

2.1.3 Ideology: An Educator’s Perspective from Paulo Freire

Educational problems can be analysed from the perspective of ideology. Freire encourages educators to uncover the influence of dominant ideologies when they confront educational problems or obstacles faced by subordinate student populations.

⁸⁶ Althusser, L. (1996) “Marxism and Humanism” in *For Marx*. trans. Ben Brewster. Verso: London, England., p.231.

⁸⁷ Malesevic, S. and MacKanzie, I. (eds.) (2002) *Ideology After Poststructuralism*. Pluto Press: London, England. p.28.

In the case of this thesis it is the (in)equity of rural compulsory education of China. Freire argues that in order to solve an educational problem, educators must “confront” the problem, that is, comprehensively and historically situate the problem. There is a need “to look for answers within the historical realm of economic, social, and political forms, so that we might better understand the forces that give rise to our humanity as it currently exists.”⁸⁸ The works of Freire draw us to the importance of moving away from a distinct methodology of problem solving to the more critical aspect of problematising or contextualising the question. The most common problem solving approach is to utilise a defined method for directing a question to an answer such as $a \times b = c$. This method of knowing, via a predetermined logic, means that the conclusion is contained within a particular pre-determined framework, even though an authentic question may perhaps be one for which the answer is not really known. While problematisation requires the researcher to maintain a distance from the object of investigation and to view it from fresh perspectives, the researcher has to be cautious not to be too far away so as to lose sight of the real experience involved in the question or invalidate the answer through abstraction.

⁸⁸ Darder, A. (2002) *Reinventing Paulo Freire: A Pedagogy of Love*. Westview Press: Oxford, England. p.35.

Ideology matters in Freire's discourse. Discriminatory ideological discourses exist in political, social, economic and education policies and practices influencing schooling. Often, the structural conditions of social injustice and economic inequality at work in the process of schooling are ignored. There is an unfair official system that ultimately functions to legitimate the ideological formations necessary for the reproduction of inequality.⁸⁹ Indeed, the choice of policy leaders made depends on their respective ideas, their discourses. In Freire's approach, there is the need for "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality."⁹⁰

After situating the problem, the next step of action is to critically analyse or "deconstruct" the issue, and in so doing make the oppressive ideological discourse(s) evident (one of the tasks of this thesis is to argue for the existence of oppressive ideological discourse(s) in China regarding rural compulsory education). Finally it is to propose and imagine realistic alternative possibilities, to envision and then take the courage to implement more humane and democratic solutions, which would lead to the reconstruction of the problem as a means of developing liberating solutions.

⁸⁹ Apple, M. (1995) *Education and Power*. Routledge: London, England.

⁹⁰ Freire, P. (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Seabury Press: New York, N.Y., p.19.

2.1.4 Ideology and Action

Ideology functions as a framework of socio-political activities and is practice and action oriented. In essence, all dominant political ideologies carry a conception of an ideal society within which true human potential and humanity flourish. They provide the individual believer with a sense of identity and a sense of purpose. They are guides to political action and prescribe the kinds of policy to pursue. Ideology possesses “a powerful influence on human affairs.”⁹¹ In this thesis, attempts are made to examine the domain of ideas, coherent and yet changing, which inspire political and social actions and how these associate with inequity of rural students of communist China.

In *What is to be Done?* Lenin advances the concept of socialism to “the ideology of struggle of the proletarian class.”⁹² Ideology, breaking from the classical conception of Marx and Engels, is no longer only linked to the ideas of the ruling bourgeoisie. It starts to be used as a framework for political action, a weapon in the class struggle. The importance of ideologies, as revealed by Lenin, is that they are

⁹¹ Skidmore, M. (1993) *Ideologies : Politics in Action (2nd Edition)*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich: Orlando, FL., p. 1.

⁹² Lenin, V.I. (1902) *What is to be Done?*. trans. Joe Fineberg and George Hanna (1998). Penguin Books: London, England.

“useful”,⁹³ regardless of whether they are true or false. Instead of following the classical Marxist conception of “false consciousness” as a representation of ideology, Lenin transforms the conception of ideology to one that considers all forms of action as ideological. How useful the ideology is for socio-political and economic purposes becomes a core consideration of leaders. It was this understanding of ideology that informed Chinese Communist leaders when Marxism arrived in China.

2.1.5 Importance of ideologies in Chinese society and political arena

The CCP gained power and established the People’s Republic of China in 1949. One of its immediate and critical tasks was pulling together the broken pieces of China into a unity and transforming a backward country into a relatively modern state. Ideology was systematically used as an instrument to create unity and to effect a much-needed transformation in the organisation of the state. Through the adherence to a consistent and yet changing ideology, the CCP created a network of organisations that still today covers the whole of Chinese society and permeates deep into every corner of the country. In China, ideology, as an organised framework of ideas, offers the essential elements of communications systems on platforms

⁹³ Boudon, R. (1989) *The Analysis of Ideology*. trans. Malcolm Slater. Polity Press: Cambridge, England., p.18.

including party meetings, media and schools.⁹⁴

Since there are specific ideological views of the theories of the Communist regime, its ideology does not only provide a basis for searching and knowing the world but also directs its political actions and determines the source of existing social motives. This is why the interaction of the development of its ideology and the continuation of the communist regime is an unavoidable basis for discussion.

Scalapino points out that there are three important and inter-related elements in the research of communist issues: tradition, timing and ideology.⁹⁵ It is only through an overall comparison of these three that one can best master the subject. This point reveals that ideology often becomes an important avenue of understanding, analysing and researching communist subjects. This was especially obvious when totalitarianism was the mainstream model of explanation in the 1960s, in the study of communist subjects on which ideology was the main focus. An example is the totalitarian model, developed by Friedrich and Brezezinski, which emphasises the

⁹⁴ Schurmann, F. (1968) *Ideology and Organization in Communist China*. University of California Press: Berkeley, CA., pp.58-68.

⁹⁵ Scalapino, R. (1977) "On the study of Contemporary Chinese Communism" in *Zhongguo Xiao Dai Shi Zhuan Ti Yan Jiu Bao Gao*. Zhonghua Min Guo Shi Liao Yan Jiu Zhong Xin: Taipei, ROC. Vol.7., p.73-81. (中國現代史專題研究報告.台北: 中華民國史料研究中心).

societal penetrative power of the communist regime.⁹⁶

Schurmann's *Ideology and Organization in Communist China* puts forward the concept of "organizational ideology". To him, ideology is "the manner of thinking characteristic of an organisation" and an organisation is "a rational instrument engineered to do a job". Organisational ideology functions "as a systematic set of ideas with action consequences serving the purpose of creating and using organization."⁹⁷ Upon defining Chinese Communist ideology as organisational ideology, Schurmann further divides it into the concepts of "pure ideology" and "practical ideology" and makes use of the conceptual framework to analyse the development and changes of Chinese Communist ideology. In other words, from the perspective of organisational ideology, all thoughts and concepts would eventually produce action as a result. However, the relationship between "idea" and "action" may not be direct. There is an idea which would directly induce action, whereas others would not directly lead to action but would only indirectly influence subsequent actions shaped by the thinking of the organisation's members. Schurmann terms the former, which relates action directly to the connected idea, "practical" and

⁹⁶ Friedrich, C. and Brzezinski, Z. (1965) *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*. Harvard University Press: Boston, Mass.

⁹⁷ Schurmann, F. (1968) *Ideology and Organization in Communist China*. University of California Press: Berkeley, CA., p. 18.

the latter, which moulds thinking but does not produce action directly, as “pure”. The “pure” and the “practical” constitute the essential contents of organisational ideology. Accordingly, the whole of Chinese Communist ideology is composed of two parts: pure ideology and practical ideology. Pure ideology is formed from theory while practical ideology is a catalyst and/or bonding agent between pure ideology and action. In communist China, “Marxism-Leninism” is considered as a pure ideology while “Mao Zedong Thought” was the practical ideology at the time when Schurmann advanced his concept.

Seliger also provides an analysis of ideology from a two-dimensional approach.⁹⁸ He maintains that ideology is action-oriented ideas and examines it from the perspective of political action. He explains it has two aspects: the dimension of fundamental ideology and the dimension of operative ideology. The former determines the ultimate value of the objective and development while the latter is used to rationalise the practice of policy. In extending this to the Chinese Communist context, it would mean that the fundamental ideology represents the legitimacy of the value of the ultimate objective of the Chinese Communist regime. The operative ideology (or the operative ideologies) is (are), however, formed for the

⁹⁸ Seliger, M. (1976) *Ideology and Politics*. The Free Press: New York, N.Y..

achievement of objective(s) of immediate tasks; with which the authority of the leaders is legitimised.

Sun makes use of Seliger's "fundamental ideology" and "operative ideology" in her examination of Chinese Communist ideology,⁹⁹ and meanwhile applies the "gradational approach" of Taras Ray to reading the changes of ideology,¹⁰⁰ which is viewed as "a continuum whose components have different orders of importance to the belief system."¹⁰¹ Ideology is understood not only as "an instrument of social control or a form of linguistic expression", its role on the "normative and methodological levels" is recognised and used to analyse changes within political and social arenas. It is helpful for this study, as shall be seen later, that ideological discourse(s) such as revolution-led proletarianism, modernisation-led economism and harmonism function with various degrees of significance in the Chinese Marxist belief system. Arguably, this is connected to Althusser's work which enables us to have a possible view that the Chinese Communist Party, itself being an "ideological state apparatus" and at the same time mastering other "ideological state apparatus"

⁹⁹ Sun, Y. (1995) "Ideology and the Demise or Maintenance of Soviet-type Regimes: Perspectives on the Chinese Case". *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*. Vol. 28, No. 3, pp.319-338.

¹⁰⁰ Ray, T. (1984) *Ideology in a Socialist State, Poland 1956-1983*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, England. p.26.

¹⁰¹ Sun, Y. (1995) "Ideology and the Demise or Maintenance of Soviet-type Regimes: Perspectives on the Chinese Case". *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*. Vol. 28, No. 3, p.321.

such as schools, transforms the Marxist belief system via manipulation of the ideological discourses that generate a multitude of different subject positions. With this, we shall proceed to understand their relationship from a dialectical perspective.

2.2 Dialectics

What is dialectics? In essence, dialectics can be viewed as “a way of thinking that brings into focus the full range of changes and interactions that occur in the world.”¹⁰² It has a change-oriented focus. To quote Peter Yu, basic dialectics includes the following elements:¹⁰³

- a. All things are in constant change;
- b. The ultimate source of the change is within the thing or process itself;
- c. This source is the struggle of opposites, the contradiction, within each thing;
- d. This struggle, at nodal points, brings about qualitative changes, or leaps, so that the thing is transformed into something else; and
- e. Practical –critical activity resolves the contradictions.

Althusser highlights the significance of dialectics by saying: “When the ‘laws’

¹⁰² Ollman, B. (1993) *Dialectical Investigations*. Routledge: New York, N.Y., p.10.

¹⁰³ Yu, P. (1999) *Bicoastal China: A Dialectical Paradigmatic Analysis*. New Science Publishers: Commack, N.Y., pp.11-12.

of the dialectic are stated, it is conservative (Engels) or apologetic (Stalin). But when it is critical and revolutionary, the dialectic is extremely valuable.”¹⁰⁴ He sees that there is, in general, an unsurpassing finitude and contingency of dialectics which is “neither a rule nor fixed laws, because the object and its *Maßstab* [measure] vary over the course of the process.”¹⁰⁵ Dickhut sees dialectics as an art of discourse,¹⁰⁶ revealing the dynamics of the relationship of various discourses. It is not a scientific approach with a pre-defined framework of applying different discourses. An appreciation of this helps our comprehension of issues in the PRC. Mao Zedong’s leadership is driven by his mastering of dialectics and his advancement of the method. He once said: “We have to popularize dialectics and dialectics has to be developed. In a word, I ask that dialectics be popularized step by step so that we will have 600 million dialecticians.”¹⁰⁷ Simply put, Mao wanted the whole population of China (it was 600 million then) to become dialecticians for the advancement of Marxism in China because Mao believed dialectics was the way to realise the best route for the progress of China. In a similar way as the dialectical method assisted Marx’s acquisition of his theory on analysing capitalist society, its origins and plausible

¹⁰⁴ Althusser, L. (2006) “Philosophy and Marxism” in *Philosophy of the Encounter Later Writings, 1978-1987*. ed. F. Matheron and O. Corpet. trans. G.M. Goshgarian. Verso: London, U.K. p.254.

¹⁰⁵ Althusser, L. (1997) *The Spectre of Hegel*. ed. F. Matherson. trans. G.M. Goshgarian. Verso: London, U.K., p. 113. (bracketed wording in original).

¹⁰⁶ Dickhut, W. (2002) *The Dialectical Method in the Working-Class Movement. The Dialectical Unity of Theory and Practice.(English Edition)*. Verlag NeuerWeg: Essen, Germany., p.13.

¹⁰⁷ Ollman, B. (1993) *Dialectical Investigations*. Routledge: New York, N.Y., p.v.

destinations, Mao's dialectics (a combination of Marxist and Chinese) guided him to structure his Chinese version of Marxism and to put it in the content, form and order to appeal to the Chinese masses. As Ollman says, "Marx's method is to his theory what grand strategy is to the outcome of the war. It not only plays a decisive role in determining who wins (what works) or loses (fails), but helps to define what either means."¹⁰⁸ Dialectics is powerful in that, in addition to the ability to conclude success or failure, it also characterises the interpretation of success and failure. Those Chinese leaders who were able to master dialectics enabled themselves and the CCP to survive critical crises in the political arena. The PRC is an arena of dialectical politics and hence should be analysed dialectically.

Although one can understand dialectics from the "thesis-antithesis-synthesis" perspective, to serve as an explanation,¹⁰⁹ it should not be limited to this structure. For a dialectician, reality is not only the immediate appearance — putting all the trust on the immediate evidence can be extremely deceptive. There is a need for one to understand a matter/an issue/a subject/a phenomenon from its origin, its development process and the way it exists within the larger social, political and economic context

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p.1.

¹⁰⁹ Rescher, N. (2007) *Dialectics: A Classical Approach to Inquiry*. Ontosverlag: Heusenstamm, Germany., pp.3-4.

of which it is a part. Dialectics is an expansion of one's notion to include the process by which a matter/an issue/a subject/ a phenomenon comes into being and at the same time inter-connecting it with the wider context in which it exists. There is interaction with history, the encompassing system and the possible future.¹¹⁰ In this sense, Freire is a dialectician because he argues for the need to comprehend educational problems and to locate answers "within the historical realm of economic, social, and political forms, so that we might better understand the forces that give rise to our humanity as it currently exists."¹¹¹ Dialectical analysis does not start with the "part" but with the "whole" (or as much of it as one comprehends). Totality is the starting point of investigation. It then proceeds inward to the part so as to examine the individual elements to understand "where it fits and how it functions, leading eventually to a fuller understanding of the whole from where one has begun."¹¹² Dialecticians conceive "all parts as process in relations of mutual dependence."¹¹³ As Ollman has pointed out, by organising reality dialectically, Marx was able to get hold of "both the organic and historical movements of capitalism in their specific interconnections."¹¹⁴ The emphasis of dialectics is on totality.

¹¹⁰ Ollman, B. (1993) *Dialectical Investigations*. Routledge: New York, N.Y., p.11.

¹¹¹ Darder, A. (2002) *Reinvesting Paulo Freire: A Pedagogy of Love*. Westview Press: Oxford, England., p.35.

¹¹² Ollman, B. (1993) *Dialectical Investigations*. Routledge: New York, N.Y., p.12.

¹¹³ Ibid., p.17.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

Dialectics presumes objects and phenomena of nature are inter-connected. They go through qualitative changes as a result of their inherent contradictions, which are the basis for the development of all phenomena of reality. Marxist globalism (it is the sense of totality, and the discourse signifying the global propensity of Marxism which eventually will win in all parts of the world, but it is not the same thing as globalisation) comes with a world outlook of the present and of the ways of things unfolding. Its core ideological discourse is the building of a most humane society - the communist society - via the transformation of social relations led by the proletariat for the best interests of the overall development of humanity.¹¹⁵ Marxism is not static but progresses as a living and innovative ideology. It has to be continuously refined, re-defined and enriched by new theoretical concepts and discovery. The forming of communism and socialism, and the nurturing of liberation movements in various countries, the advancement of the global revolutionary process, and the intensification of ideological challenges demand further advancement of Marxism.¹¹⁶ While Marxist globalism carries an anticipation of the world outlook, Marxist localism points to the local reality of the country on which Marxism lands, realising the need to first locate, analyse and then master political, social, economic

¹¹⁵ Kharin, Y. (1981) *Fundamentals of Dialectics*. trans. from Russian by Konstantin Kostrov. Progress Publishers: Moscow, U.S.S.R., p.48.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p.51.

and cultural relations of the local “in their full complexity” so that Marxism is able to acquire legitimacy locally and in the global arena.¹¹⁷ In Dirlik’s wordings, “[t]he local in the process becomes the site upon which the multi-faceted contradictions of contemporary society play out.”¹¹⁸

It would be appropriate at this point to clarify the meanings of globalism-localism and that of globalisation and localisation. The globalism-localism dialectic refers to the Marxist *approach* to making sense of socio-political changes which constructs various political rationalities. It is an analysis of the contribution of national struggles to achieve worldwide communism. Globalism is the discourse signifying global momentum and universality. Localism is the discourse which emphasises that particular actions are required in individual countries; it carries historical socio-political specificity. Globalisation however refers to the actual *development* of interconnecting economic, social and cultural practices, which in China, the PRC is associated with “locally”. The dialectic of globalism-localism is part of the activities of “governmentality” which shall be discussed in the later part of this chapter. It functions as a discursive practice, which locks up the various

¹¹⁷ Dirlik, A. (1997) *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism*. Westview Press: Boulder, Colorado., p.96.

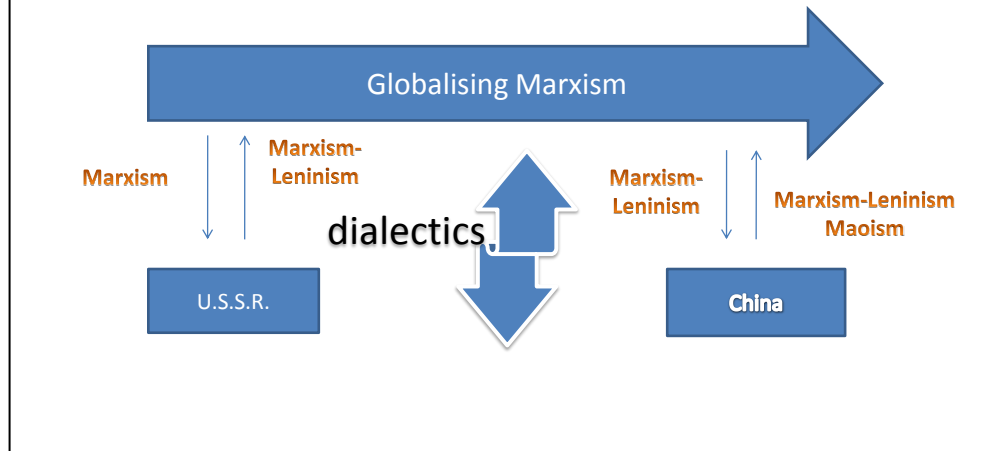
¹¹⁸ Ibid., p.96.

periods and solidifies them as Chinese Marxism. This dialectical endeavour reflects the leadership process of constructing a “political rationality” that ensures succession but also directs policy and frames an understanding of the “reality” of the PRC. On the other hand, globalisation and localisation are actual developments, which are partly constituted by discursive practices but also result from a range of factors which are non-discursive, including developments in science, technology, communications and economic fortunes etc.

The Chinese Communist’ ideological dialectics of Marxist globalism and localism, in the course of theorising and practising Marxism, follow Marx’s epistemology which “begins with recognising that knowledge is historically specific and also never complete or finished.”¹¹⁹ It is an on-going process and takes into account that the reality of the world is composed of continuous dialectical contradictions with lasting tension and movement. They seek to understand the world and themselves through this dialectical process (Figure 2.1), which will be explained in the next paragraph.

¹¹⁹ Allman, P. (2007) *On Marx: An Introduction to the Revolutionary Intellect of Karl Marx*. Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, The Netherlands., p.60

Figure 2.1
Schematic of dialectics of Marxist globalism and localism



In the course of ideological dialectics of globalism and localism, the initial position (or orientation) when Marxism first arrives in the U.S.S.R. becomes subject to adjustment by counter forces or resistance. That initial position (or orientation) is re-configured constantly through a series of consecutive reactions to challenges that result in its alterations and refinement. As the process continues, complexity and sophistication are built up in such a way as to increasingly stabilise that position (or orientation) by reducing its vulnerability to challenges and hindrances.¹²⁰ There is a need for globalism and localism, as counter-discourses, to assist conciliation. Whenever a convincing discourse of globalism is confronted with a convincing

¹²⁰ Rescher, N. (2007) *Dialectics: A Classical Approach to Inquiry*. Ontosverlag: Heusenstamm, Germany., p. 3.

counter-discourse of localism, or vice versa, the original discourse will have to be subject to refinement, adjustment and /or increased complexity. There is a re-configuration into Marxism-Leninism. The original discourse is not upturned but revised in order to allow each side the readjustment of its own core concepts and recognise the different beliefs and qualities of both opposing tendencies. There is, in the process, dialogical interaction of exchanges between globalism and localism carried on in a context aimed at finding the most appropriate answer. The process is about transformation in which contradictions and conflicts of consistency are overcome and surpassed. The momentum of coherence and consistency is the motivating force of any dialectical process.¹²¹ In the move of globalising Marxism, it appears in China in the configuration of Marxism-Leninism as its initial orientation but again becomes subject to adjustment and enhancement through the momentum of destabilising forces of counter-consideration—this time from the Chinese context. As shall be seen in subsequent chapters, Chinese Marxism has gone through the process of refinement and adjustment in the Mao, Deng, Jiang and Hu eras. Together with the conceptual framework of Michel Foucault, which shall be discussed in the next section, it will be seen that the dialectics of “globalism-localism” forms part of the

¹²¹ Rescher, N. (2007) *Dialectics: A Classical Approach to Inquiry*. Ontosverlag: Heusenstamm, Germany., p. 5.

ideological positioning of educational policy. The outcome of dialectics of “globalism-localism” is utilised as part of the socialist discourse in the Chinese political arena.

2.3 Michel Foucault—ideology/discourse as social and political action and interaction

The works of Michel Foucault form a significant part of the theoretical basis of this thesis. As Olssen, Codd and O’Neill have noted, “Foucault replaces the concept of ideology with that of *discourse*. He represents discourse as one of a variety of practices whose most significant units are ‘serious speech and acts’, both written and spoken.”¹²² Discourses are about “things said” and “are composed of signs but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this move that renders them irreducible to the language and to speech. It is this ‘move’ that we must reveal and describe.”¹²³

While discourse is associated with what is said, it is also about what is not said or cannot be said—some thoughts and practices are excluded for a purpose. Context forms an important element in the study of discourse. This is especially relevant

¹²² Olssen, M., Codd, J. and O’neill, A. (2004) *Education Policy: Globalization, Citizenship & Democracy*. Sage Publication: London, England., p.22.

¹²³ Foucault, M. (1974) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Tavistock: London, England., p.49.

when we analyse policy discourse “where the context of implementation is to be differentiated from the context of policy formation.”¹²⁴ Foucault helps us to understand that there are socio-political events of prohibition and rejection and the distinction between “truth” and “falsehood” which structure the manner in which knowledge is directed to function in society. Discourse, for Foucault, is related to the exercise of power. Discourse instructs and is directed by power. As he expresses it in

The History of Sexuality:

“Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy.”¹²⁵

Foucault’s work is pluralistic; he repudiates the claim of categorising cause-and-effect linkages “to render apparent the polymorphous interweaving of correlations.”¹²⁶ At any given time, he sees, there are various complex interlinking discourses and strategies at play. Discourses are multivalent and interwoven. With this view his approach to discourse is significant because he opposes simple causality

¹²⁴ Olssen, M., Codd, J. and O’neill, A. (2004) *Education Policy: Globalization, Citizenship & Democracy*. Sage Publication: London, England., p.23.

¹²⁵ Foucault, M. (1981) *The History of Sexuality Vol.1: An Introduction*. trans. Robert Hurley. Pantheon Books: New York, N.Y., pp.100-101.

¹²⁶ Foucault, M. (1991) “Politics and the Study of Discourse.” in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality. With two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault*. (eds.) G. Burchell, C. Gordon & P. Miller. University of Chicago Press: Chicago, Il., p.58.

as an answer to problems. Discourse does not rest in itself but exercises its productive capacity. Hence Foucault writes, “discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.”¹²⁷ Foucault’s work gives the concepts of “discursive practices” and “discursive formation” to the analysis of ways of establishing orders of “truth”, or what is being viewed as “reality” in a given socio-political arena. An established “discursive formation” is shaped by the contradictory discourses it contains (arguably, it is dialectical) and is understood as reinforcing certain already established identities or subjectivities such as class or status. In the case of communist China, we may argue that by the end of 1970s, the “discursive formation” when Deng began to take power was shaped by the contradictory discourses of “revolutionist” and “reformist”. These dominant discourses are in turn reinforced by existing socio-political systems. Foucault helps us to understand the “archaeology” or “genealogy” of the production of knowledge—that is, the continuities and discontinuities between “epistemes” and the socio-political setting in which particular knowledges and practices arise as acceptable and desired or not.¹²⁸ In seeing knowledge as intricately linked to power, Foucault links the two words together to form the term power/knowledge. Therefore,

¹²⁷ Foucault, M. (1981) *The History of Sexuality Vol.I: An Introduction*. trans. Robert Hurley Pantheon Books: New York, N.Y., p101.

¹²⁸ “epistemes” refers to the knowledge framework or system which principally structure the thinking of particular periods of time in history.

Foucault writes: “Power produces knowledge; that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.”¹²⁹

A Foucauldian understanding of power is that the exercise of power and the manifestation of power relations are associated with the production of “truth”. The question of “truth” is important for Foucault as he argues that every society has its “regimes of truth”; that is, what discourses are accepted and produce true statements and the mechanisms and practices that allow these discourses to distinguish between true and false statements. In Foucault’s wordings, “[e]ach society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true.”¹³⁰ Foucault argues that,

¹²⁹ Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and punish*. Penguin: London, U.K., p.27.

¹³⁰ Foucault, M. (1980) “Truth and power”. in *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. ed. C. Gordon. Harvester Press: Sussex, U.K., p.131.

“regime of truth” is “so essential to the structure and functioning of [the] society.”¹³¹

“Truth” is not lacking in power, it is “the ensemble of rules according to which the true and false are separated and specific effects of power are attached to the true.”¹³²

Foucault’s view of power emphasises the point that it is not possessed but rather it is exercised through networks of relations that are constantly in tension.

For Foucault a central feature of contemporary society is the formation of domains of knowledge through social practices, which include monitoring and governance. Formation of knowledge is governed by particular rules that structure what can be truthfully declared at any one time, the decisive factor of support, the form of evidence or even the very object which they articulate. Foucault attempts to demonstrate “the historical construction of a subject through a discourse understood as consisting as a set of strategies which are part of social practices.”¹³³ In the midst of the generation of new concepts and techniques, fresh subjects and subjects of knowledge are also produced. Argued along the same lines in this thesis, it is in the search of “truth”, relating the discourse of Marxism, that the inquiry of Chinese

¹³¹ Foucault, M. (1980) “Truth and power”. in *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. ed. C. Gordon Harvester Press: Sussex, U.K., p.132.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Foucault, M. (2002) “Truth and juridical forms”. in *Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, Volume 3: Power*. ed. J.D. Faubion. Penguin: Harmondsworth., p.4.

leaders was grounded. This inquiry developed as a particular way of knowing, “a condition of possibility of knowledge,”¹³⁴ and is critical to the People’s Republic of China. It can be seen as a governmental endeavour, an organisational skill, an administrative attempt; that is, a defined way of exercising power. Thus, the inquiry comes forward as a domain of knowledge, a political structure that directs the means of substantiating truth, a domain of power/knowledge. Constantly, Foucault reiterates that power is productive through the socio-political system. It is one of the purposes of politics to produce knowledge and “truth” that enhance legitimisation.

Knowledge is invented; it is constructed through struggle and interplay of instincts, not something that is intrinsic in human nature. Hence, Foucault contends:

“Knowledge is simply the outcome of the interplay, the encounter, the junction, the struggle, and the compromise between the instincts. Something is produced because the instincts meet, fight one another, and at the end of their battles finally reach a compromise. That something is knowledge.”¹³⁵

Modifications in the content of knowledge, Foucault argues, are not governed by a steady build-up of knowledge or the on-going advancement of truth or reason. It is instead a swift and unexpected shift in the way the world is understood (this will

¹³⁴ Ibid., p.40.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p.8.

help us to understand the changes in dominant discourses in the Mao, Deng, Jiang and Hu's era). In the mind of Foucault, in a transition from one discursive formation or historical era to another, "things are no longer perceived, described, expressed, characterized, classified, and known in the same way."¹³⁶ This is the discontinuity he talks about. While Foucault highlights discontinuity, he does not discard continuity because, arguably, the two form a dialectical relation. To analyse historical transformation, one has to see it from both sides. There is continuity in the midst of discontinuity. Foucault says:

"To say that one discursive formation is substituted for another is not to say that a whole world of absolutely new objects, enunciations, concepts, and theoretical choices emerges fully armed and fully organized in a text that will place that world once and for all; it is to say that a general transformation of relations has occurred, but that it does not necessarily alter all the elements; it is not to say that all objects or concepts, all enunciations or all theoretical choices disappear. On the contrary, one can, on the basis of these new rules, describe and analyze phenomena of continuity, return, and repetition.... One of these elements—or several of them—may remain identical (preserve the same division, the same characteristics, the same structures), yet belong to different systems of dispersion, and be governed by distinct laws of formation."¹³⁷

This study attempts to turn the abstract concepts of Foucault into a means of analysing the political and social arena of China. The dialectics of globalism and

¹³⁶ Foucault, M. (1973) *The Order of Things*. Vintage: New York, N.Y., p.217.

¹³⁷ Foucault, M. (1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith., Tavistock Publications: London, England., p.173

localism is argued to be one of the “distinct laws of formation”. There is in the PRC the type of domination of society, which is produced and reproduced through discourse that forms and constitutes identities while it maintains and enhances power relations.

Another concept that informs this study is Foucault’s notion of governmentality, the meaning of which is complex but can be crystallised in two words: “governmental rationality”.¹³⁸ Instead of understanding societal changes from an examination of the institution of the state, Foucault directs us to pay attention to the changes in rationale of the practices. It is about the examination of the “technologies” which have constituted the dynamic and complex system of power exercised over the masses.¹³⁹ Government, for Foucault, “is a form of activity aiming to shape, guide or affect the conduct of some person or persons.”¹⁴⁰ Governmentality, in his views, is:

“the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population as its principal form of knowledge, political economy, and as its essential technical means and apparatuses of security.”¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Gordon, C. (1991) “Governmental rationality: an introduction” In *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. eds. G. Burchell, C. Gordon, P. Miller. Harvester Wheatsheaf: London, England.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Gordon, C. (1991) “Governmental rationality: an introduction “ in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. eds. G. Burchell, C. Gordon, P. Miller. Harvester Wheatsheaf: London, England., p.2-3.

¹⁴¹ Foucault, M. (1991) “Governmentality” in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. eds. G. Burchell, C. Gordon, P. Miller. Harvester Wheatsheaf: London, England., p.102.

This quotation suggests that the concept of governmentality is not limited to ideology. Indeed, it includes political rationality—the reason for state intervention (in the case of the PRC, party intervention) and its constrained domain of action. Certainly, some thoughts are involved. Political rationality acts as a basis for political actions and simultaneously is a condition of it. With this, problems of government can be examined from the perspectives of political rationality and governmental technologies. To extend Foucault’s concept, Miller and Rose argue that:

“Government is the historically constituted matrix within which are articulated all those dreams, schemes, strategies and manoeuvres of authorities that seek to shape the beliefs and conduct of others in desired directions by acting upon their will, their circumstances or their environment.”¹⁴²

These rationalities signify the discursive problematisation and categorisation of the practices of government, which may involve answers to questions such as; why intervene; in what way; what are the constraints? Rose and Miller draw our attention to three characteristics for political rationalities: “morally coloured, grounded upon knowledge, and made thinkable through language.”¹⁴³ Firstly, morality articulates the ideals or values to which government should be directed. Secondly, the grounding in knowledge highlights that political rationalities are pronounced in terms

¹⁴² Rose, N. and Miller, P. (1992) “Political power beyond the State: problematics of government”. in *British Journal of Sociology* Vol. 43, No.2., p.175.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p.179.

of concepts of the nature of the objects governed. Thirdly, the “thinkability” requires the rendering of reality in a language and format that allows it governable. Political rationalities in the PRC include proletarianisation (as in the Mao era), prosperity (as in the Deng era) and equity (as in the Hu era).

While Foucault establishes a sound theoretical basis, his focus is “mainly with the social and political analysis of discursive practices as systems of rules, rather than with textual analysis of real instances of what is said or written.”¹⁴⁴ The theoretical framework of this thesis hence is put within the theoretical framework of Althusser and Foucault, and the insight of Freire to reveal the impact of policy discourse on social and political reality and how the social and political context shapes policy discourse.

2.4 Borrowing and Extension of Foucault’s Concepts

The deployment of the concepts of Foucault in educational studies is not a unique approach since quite a number of scholars have applied these to educational policy analysis. Olssen *et al*’s book is a more recent example linking Foucault and

¹⁴⁴ Olssen, M., Codd, J. and O’neill, A. (2004) *Education Policy: Globalization, Citizenship & Democracy*. Sage Publication: London, England., p.68.

policy, adding a contribution to the growing field of critical education policy analysis.¹⁴⁵ Other researchers who have also developed approaches to policy analysis within the policy sociology theoretical framework include Stephen Ball¹⁴⁶ and Trevor Gale.¹⁴⁷ In the following pages their approaches will be outlined together with an elaboration on how their work is borrowed and extended in this study.

2.4.1 Olssen, Codd & O'Neill's Critical Discourse Analysis in Educational Policy

The work of Olssen, Codd & O'Neill contributes a critical approach to discourse analysis in education policy in a globalised era by demonstrating “the conceptual complexity of reading state-produced policy discourse” and by highlighting the importance of the “dynamics of the various elements of the social structure and their intersections in the context of history.”¹⁴⁸ They employ extensively Foucault's theoretical concepts of power and discourse within the critical social theory that policy is formulated and implemented with special political, social

¹⁴⁵ Olssen, M., Codd, J. and O'Neill, A. (2004) *Education Policy: Globalization, Citizenship & Democracy*. Sage Publication: London, England.

¹⁴⁶ Ball, S. (1993) “What is Policy? Texts, Trajectories and Toolboxes” in *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* Vol. 13 Issue 2, p.10-17. And Ball, S. (1994) *Education Reform: A Critical and Post-Structural Approach*. Open University Press: Buckingham, England. And Ball, S. (1998) “Big Policies/Small World: An Introduction to International Perspective in Education Policy” in *Comparative Education*. Vol. 34, Issue 2, p.119-130.

¹⁴⁷ Gale, T. (1999) “Policy Trajectories: Treading the discursive path of policy analysis” in *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* Vol. 20 Issue 3, p.393-407.

¹⁴⁸ Olssen, M., Codd, J. and O'Neill, A. (2004) *Education Policy: Globalization, Citizenship & Democracy*. Sage Publication: London, England.p.2.

and historical contexts. They maintain that the Foucauldian approach enables a more multidisciplinary analysis by incorporating “a form of ‘critical policy analysis’ within a more grounded and theoretically worked-out ‘critical social science approach.’”¹⁴⁹

Their conception that policy is produced by and for the state facilitates a critical reading of state-produced educational policy texts linked to official discourse.¹⁵⁰ This is especially relevant in the case of Communist China. Here in this thesis, I try to extend this concept, not to be limited to official policy but also to the speeches of Chinese leaders and the decisions of the State Council which, in many cases, carry even more authority than published policy documents.¹⁵¹

The PRC is essentially a state dominated by bureaucratic authoritarianism and “remains a command system in terms of top-down flow of authority”.¹⁵² “Party leadership directives are the primary means of regulating.....the whole system”.¹⁵³

As Townsend and Womack have pointed out, execution of policy, in the form of

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p.59.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid. p.64.

¹⁵¹ State Council of the PRC is the executive administrative authority of the state. Headed by the premier, the State Council administers all internal and external matters via various ministries (of which Ministry of Education is one) and commissions.

¹⁵² Hamrin, C. and Zhao, S. (eds.) (1995) *Decision-Making in Deng's China: Perspectives From Insiders*. M.E. Sharpe: Armonk, N.Y., p.xxv.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

comprehensive local-level administration, “is coordinated by the county in rural areas and by towns or city districts in urban areas”.¹⁵⁴ It is quite understandable that, in reality, in a tightly controlled system with centralised executive power,¹⁵⁵ there are only a limited number of people who actually read state-produced policy texts (bearing also in mind of the remote-ness, poverty and illiteracy of the rural population which makes up the majority of the national population). This may be explained as a part of the existence of documentary politics for policy control in terms of formation and execution.¹⁵⁶ In the western world, these texts are mediated by other sources, especially the media. However, policies, and messages in policies, are mainly transmitted in communist learning classes organised by various local secretaries of the Communist Party as a form of political education in group activities via direct contact and moral leadership.¹⁵⁷ Before the introduction of a modern, market-oriented system, the media, such as newspaper and television played a secondary, if not a minor role, especially in the first few decades of the communist regime.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ Townsend, J. and Womack, B. (1986) *Politics in China* (3rd ed.). Little, Brown and Company: Toronto, Canada., p.85.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p.xxxvi-xxxvii.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p.xxxiv-xxxv.

¹⁵⁷ Townsend, J. (1972) *Political Participation in Communist China*. University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA., p.174-185.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p.xxvii.

2.4.2 Stephen Ball's Critical Policy Sociology

Critical social research is “not bounded by a single (grand) theoretical perspective.”¹⁵⁹ Drawing on this point, Ball views policies which are “complex social issues” and require “a toolbox of diverse concepts and theories for their analysis”.¹⁶⁰ By employing a post-structural approach to analysis, Ball emphasises the need to look “at and beyond the obvious and puts different sorts of questions on the agenda for change.”¹⁶¹ This opens up a new approach and forms a foundation for analysing China's rural compulsory education policy in this thesis, because in the past research was mainly based on funding and administrative approaches.

According to Ball's conception, there is a distinction between *policy as text* and *policy as discourse*. By showing how policy discourse exerts power through the production of knowledge and truth, Ball's approach aligns with Foucault's definition of discourse as a technology. For Ball, policy discourse “articulates and constrains the possibilities and probabilities of interpretation and enactment.”¹⁶² This highlights the specific meaning-making ability as well as the action and reaction orientation of

¹⁵⁹ Harvey, L. (1990) *Critical Social Research*. Allen and Unwin: London, England., p.8.

¹⁶⁰ Ball, S. (1994) “What is policy? Texts, trajectories and toolboxes” in *Education Reform: A Critical and Post-structural Approach*. Open University Press: Buckingham, England., p. 14-27

¹⁶¹ Ball, S. (1994) *Education Reform: A Critical and Post-structural Approach*. Buckingham: Open University Press: Buckingham, England., p.2.

¹⁶² Ball, S. (1994) “What is policy? Texts, trajectories and toolboxes” in *Education Reform: A Critical and Post-structural Approach*. Open University Press: Buckingham, England., p.23.

discourse. Instead of viewing policies as static documents, Ball highlights their dynamism. “Policy is both text and action, words and deeds, it is what is enacted as well as what is intended.”¹⁶³ In the political arena, the meaning of policies continues to shift and change. “Policies have their own momentum inside the state; purposes and intentions are reworked and reoriented over time.”¹⁶⁴ This, arguably, is along the lines of Althusser’s view on the productive and transformative power of ideology. As pointed out earlier, the dynamic life of ideology is a material one, vested in various apparatuses and their associated practices. In reality, in the operation of the government, these practices are represented by various policies with specific purposes. Ideology works through a number of diverse discourses that generate a multitude of subject positions and these diverse discourses signify the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real condition in the socio-political arena. Meantime, Ball is in line with Offe in respect of the social impact of policies: discourse acts like the “‘rules of the game’.....by differentially empowering or disempowering the relevant social groups.”¹⁶⁵ It is a continuous coding and de-coding exercise. This forms an important basis for the understanding of the

¹⁶³ Ball, S. (1994) *Education Reform: A Critical and Post-structural Approach*. Open University Press: Buckingham, England., p.10.

¹⁶⁴ Ball, S. (1994) “What is policy? Texts, trajectories and toolboxes” in *Education Reform: A Critical and Post-structural Approach*. Open University Press: Buckingham, England., p. 17.

¹⁶⁵ Offe, C. (1984) *Contradictions of the Welfare State*. Hutchinson: London, England., p.106. as quoted in Ball, S. (1994) “What is policy? Texts, trajectories and toolboxes” in *Education Reform: A Critical and Post-structural Approach*. Open University Press: Buckingham, England., p. 20.

changes and shifts of rural compulsory education policies and their interpretation over the different periods in the initial stage of socialism in China.

Ball's conception of policy as text and discourse is a useful addition to the study of critical policy sociology as it expands the notion of policy text to include action which is "beyond a narrow conception of policy as documentation and more fully renders the context of practices as one of policy production."¹⁶⁶ In summary, the framework of this thesis is informed by Ball's conception: the distinction of *policy as text* and *policy as discourse* while attempting to avoid the criticism of linearity. While Ball points out that policy relates to "local practices",¹⁶⁷ I attempt to extend this to include the ideological dialectics of globalism and localism within the Chinese Communist Party at the primary stage of socialism.

2.4.3 Policy Trajectory of Trevor Gale

In the following chapters of this study, effort is made to focus on the role of context in the compulsory education policy in China along with an analysis of the dominant discourses in that context. Gale's concept of "discursive path of policy

¹⁶⁶ Gale, T. (1999) "Policy Trajectories: Treading the discourse path of policy analysis" in *Discourse : Studies in Cultural Politics of Education*. Vol. 20 Issue 3, Dec 1999 p.395.

¹⁶⁷ Ball, S. (1994) *Education Reform: A Critical and Post-structural Approach*. Open University Press: Buckingham, England., p.10.

analysis” is employed.¹⁶⁸ Gale extends Ball’s emphasis on policy as discourse to include policy as ideology and policy as settlement.¹⁶⁹ Meanwhile, he aims to fill the void of Ball’s failure to elaborate on “interdiscursive politics.”¹⁷⁰ By incorporating the concepts of ideology and settlement to a theory of policy as discourse, Gale endeavours to explore and explain the ways in which dominant discourses are established and maintained.

In formulating policy production and re-production as a process, Gale highlights the importance of context. Policy “decisions are influenced by the material and social circumstances within which those decisions are made.”¹⁷¹ While mentioning the importance of context, Gale integrates it with the notion of inter-textuality, which includes: i) the specific historical and political context in question, ii) the surrounding texts and iii) the connection of the ‘forms of’ texts. It is these “connections”, the “woven together” elements, that means texts do not exist in isolation but in inter-textual relationships in contexts. According to Gale, policy contexts are ideologically informed. A particular piece of text, or a collection of

¹⁶⁸ Gale, T. (1999) “Policy Trajectories: Treading the discourse path of policy analysis” in *Discourse : Studies in Cultural Politics of Education*. Vol. 20 Issue 3, Dec 1999 p.393-407.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. p.394.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. p.396.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. p.398.

different pieces of text, provides policies with value and meaning as they ascribe contexts with meaning. In his enquiry into the reason why different policies are instituted and provide different effects in different locations or at different courses of history, he draws on contexts as a useful way of conceiving of policy and maintains that different contexts offer different material possibilities.

Inter-discursive relationships within contexts are critical to policy studies. “Policy contexts are domains of inter-discursive struggle amongst discourses which employ strategies to establish and maintain their dominance or challenge the dominance of others.”¹⁷² These struggles of power and dominance, according to Gale, involve an appreciation of “policy as settlement” which “at a particular historical and geographical moment defines the specifics of policy production.”¹⁷³ Policy settlements are i) asymmetrical, because the ideological discursive strategies are formulated by the dominant policy actors, ii) temporary, because the asymmetry is likely to produce crises which have to be resolved with other alternative settlements and iii) context-dependent, because they occur on strategically selected

¹⁷² Gale, T. (1999) “Policy Trajectories: Treading the discourse path of policy analysis” in *Discourse : Studies in Cultural Politics of Education*. Vol. 20 Issue 3, Dec 1999 p.400.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

occasions.¹⁷⁴

Gale provides a summary by highlighting the role of dominant discourse in the policy process. In essence, dominant discourses are temporary and subject to change. They operate to mandate the specifics of policy production at a particular historical and geographical moment. This point hence offers an appropriate theoretical basis for the study of the shifting of ideologies over the different phases at the primary stage of socialism in China and its effect on the inequity of rural compulsory education.

Gale's work offers several concepts for this thesis. First is his concept of how ideology informs discourse and is used to generate discourses to gain dominance over others. Second is his idea of how policies must be understood in their context. Here policies are understood as a result of multiple discursive struggles. Not to be omitted is that an analysis of policy must consider how dominant discourses operate.

2.5 Conclusion

Althusser's theory of ideology informs the thesis of the possibility of understanding the world outside the traditional Marxist view. The discussion of Paulo

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.p.401.

Freire's concepts of the existence of discriminatory ideologies in political, social, economic and education policies allows the thesis to argue, from an educator's perspective, for the existence of an oppressive ideology of the PRC regarding rural compulsory education. There is a need of "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions" in educational research.¹⁷⁵ Ideology is not understood as only "an instrument of social control or a form of linguistic expression", its role on the "normative and methodological levels" is recognised and can be used to analyse changes within the political and social arena.¹⁷⁶

A theoretical framework in the study of educational (in)equity in the People's Republic of China is built up in this chapter, holding the understanding that Marxism, one of the dominant political ideologies, is configured with various ideo-political discourses that provide important access to comprehending its formation, its subtlety and varieties. This study attempts to utilise the concepts of Foucault to examine the role of ideology and discourse, within the interaction and dialectics of globalism and localism, in the social and political construction of reality via the production of "knowledge" and 'truth'. The framework established here is one that sees objects,

¹⁷⁵ Freire, P. (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Seabury Press, p.9.

¹⁷⁶ Sun, Y. (1995) "Ideology and the Demise or Maintenance of Soviet-type Regimes: Perspectives on the Chinese Case" in *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*. Vol. 28, No.3, p.321.

concepts and subject positions as social constructs. By drawing on Foucault, the process of socio-political construction upon which social reality depends, as created via discourse, is revealed. In other words, discourse is elemental in the socio-political construction process on which socio-political reality depends. This is echoed by Ryan, who says, “perceptions of reality and truth are shaped within particular discourse regimes. Reality becomes whatever discourses allow it to be.”¹⁷⁷ Conceptually, Foucault draws our attention to the view that truth and knowledge are always linked to power and, in their own right, are best understood as instances of power. In fact, for Foucault, “truth is already power.”¹⁷⁸ With this view on “truth” and knowledge, he guides us to inquire not about people’s consciousness but about the regime of the production of truth.¹⁷⁹ “Truth” and its effects, Foucault considers, are results of historically specific discourses that are neither true nor false because the way to comprehend and make sense of reality is through one discourse or another. Discourse is not regarded as false consciousness nor is it defined in terms of truth or falsity.

¹⁷⁷ Ryan, J. (1999) *Race and Ethnicity in Multi-ethnic Schools: A Critical Case Study*. Multilingual Matters: Clevedon, England., p.22.

¹⁷⁸ Foucault, M. (1980) “Truth and Power” in *Power/Knowledge*, trans. C. Gordon *et al.*, Pantheon Books: New York, N.Y., p.133.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

Arguably, the dialectical nature of the views of Althusser and Foucault has been demonstrated. This dialectical orientation helps the study of transitions by taking hold of the temporal nature of things and the need to conceptualise change relationally (bearing in mind that when Foucault talks of power he is always pointing to power relations). This is relevant, because, as shall be seen in subsequent chapters, the discourse of equity is “elevated” or “truncated” in the transitions from one era to another in the PRC.

Of particular relevance to this thesis on the subject of ideology, discourse and inequity is Ryan’s concern that, “Unfortunately the discourses that have dominated social life have often not served up realities or truths that have worked in the interests of all groups equally.”¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Ryan, J. (1999) *Race and Ethnicity in Multi-ethnic Schools: A Critical Case Study*. Multilingual Matters: Clevedon, England., p.22.

Chapter Three

Educational (In)equity in the People's Republic of China

An understanding of the concept of equity is fundamental to the study of educational inequity. Equity is one of the most ancient concepts. Its meanings and connotations are shaped historically and are societal specific. In the PRC, the issue of equity permeates many aspects of economic and social development, deeply affecting reform in the different phases of the primary stage of Chinese socialism. To grasp the multi-faceted character of the subject matter, this chapter attempts to link the similarities of the concepts of (in)equity, (in)equality and (in)justice while maintaining their differences. The main notion employed in this thesis is that equity is a normative concept carrying a value-laden judgment. Emphasis is then placed on the social and political nature of equity, as “truth”, which is a core feature of political ideology, having the power to legitimise public policies. Equity is in fact a critical discourse within major political ideologies. Meantime, the Marxian approach to equality is introduced. Elaboration on the meaning, connotation and character of educational equity within the PRC then sets the context for further analysis in subsequent chapters.

In this study, educational equity is understood from Levin's four perspectives: i) starting-point equity as reflected in the equality of educational access, ii) process equity as reflected in the equality of educational participation, iii) attainment equity as reflected in results and iv) life chances equity as reflected in minimising the reinforcing effect of the social origin of students.¹⁸¹ By taking an overall picture of the PRC, it is argued that educational inequity is dominated by the urban-rural distinction. The interrelations and interactions of ideological purpose, the political agenda and educational initiatives start to surface as a foundation for the later part of the thesis.

3.1 The Meaning of Equity

Equity is a term which is difficult to define precisely. To start with, it is advisable to point out that, in terms of their meaning, equity, equality and justice are quite similar. The *International Encyclopedia of Ethics* states that, "fairness, equality, honestly, equity, integrity, and lawfulness, which are used as synonyms for justice, indicate the social order that is connoted by the term."¹⁸² Furthermore, the term

¹⁸¹ Levin, H. (1976) "Educational Opportunity and Social Inequality in Western Europe". in *Social Problems*. Vol. 24, 2, Dec., pp. 148-172.

¹⁸² Roth, J.K. (ed.) (1995) *International Encyclopedia of Ethics*. Fitzroy Dearbone: London, England., p.469.

“indicates both right relationships among people and a correct social norm.”¹⁸³ Le Grand highlights that “equity is often used synonymously, or virtually so, with justice and fairness.”¹⁸⁴ Warnock maintains that “[h]istorically it has always been a matter of extreme difficulty to separate the two notions of equality and justice, nor is it probably very profitable to try to do it.”¹⁸⁵ She further goes on to suggest that people should “take them as twin, related concepts” because together they “entail the notion of behaviour *according to a rule*.”¹⁸⁶ For Warnock, it is a rule under which “no one has any special rights” and “everyone will have an equal right.”¹⁸⁷ There are many literatures that use these terms quite interchangeably; often they are mixed together. *The Oxford Compact English Dictionary* defines equity as the quality of being fair and impartial, coming from the Latin origin of *aequitas* which has its roots in *aequus*, meaning equal.¹⁸⁸ The definition of equity in *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles* covers both fairness and justice.¹⁸⁹ This dictionary also gives equitable as one of the meanings of fair and provides a note that the word justice originates from the Latin *justica*, which means righteousness and

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Le Grand, J. (1991) *Equity and Choice: An essay in economics and applied philosophy*. Harper Collins Academic: London, England., p.8.

¹⁸⁵ Warnock, M. (1975) “The Concept of Equality in Education”. in *Oxford Review of Education*. Vol.1, No.1, p.3.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ *The Oxford Compact English Dictionary* (2003) Oxford University Press: Oxford, U.K..

¹⁸⁹ *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (2002) Oxford University Press: Oxford; New York.

equity. Fairness is one of the meanings of equity in the *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of The English Language Unabridged* and justice is mentioned twice as part of its explanation of the term.¹⁹⁰ Similarly, just and equitable are used as synonyms of fair while equitable is provided as one of the meanings of just. Equity, fairness and justice are, in the views of dictionary compilers, close to being synonyms. This is also the case in normal usage, especially in relation to matters of economics. It is quite common to observe that the terms equity or equitable can be replaced by fairness or fair, or by justice or just, without significantly changing the sense of the phrase. The idea of an “equitable” distribution of income, for example, would broadly be accepted as having the same meaning as a “fair” or “just” distribution of income.

Notwithstanding their similarity, the terms equity and equality can be quite distinctive. Firstly, the concept of equity is quite different from the concept of equality. Equality focuses on the sameness of quantity, degree and quality. A common example might be, if there are a number of children who are hungry and there is a lot of rice available. The discourse of equality would lead one to think that

¹⁹⁰ *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of The English Language Unabridged*. (1986) Merriam-Webster: Springfield, Massachusetts.

it is just for everyone to take equal amount of rice. However, equal distribution does not necessarily mean equity. The equal distribution of the same quantity of food to children of different ages or different sizes is an appropriate example. Equity does not necessarily mean equal. Equity, being a norm-oriented concept, which carries a value-laden judgment, is more abstract than equality. As Le Grand has pointed out: “Equality has a descriptive component, whereas equity is a purely normative concept.....equality of various kinds may be advocated for reasons other than equity; equitable outcomes may be quite inegalitarian.”¹⁹¹

In *The Handbook of Inequality and Socioeconomic Position*, “inequity and equity” are said to “refer to how fairly services, opportunities and access are distributed across groups of people or places, according to the need of that group. Inequities are said to occur when services do not reflect.....needs.”¹⁹² There is a need for children in rural China and urban China to be educated as stipulated by Chinese law and compulsory educational policy. However, the lack of funding to the rural areas prevents children there from receiving education services, creating inequity between urban and rural provision. As Shaw and Galobardes have pointed out, “[i]nequality is

¹⁹¹ Le Grand, J. (1991) *Equity and Choice: An essay in economics and applied philosophy*. Harper Collins Academic: London, England., p.8.

¹⁹² Shaw, M. Galobardes, B. et al (2007) *The Handbook of inequality and socioeconomic position*. The Polity Press: Bristol, U.K..p.13.

said to exist when there is a difference in the distribution of a resource (such as income) or outcome (such as educational achievement) across groups of people or places (for example, by socioeconomic group or by gender).”¹⁹³

3.2 Equity: Social and Political Nature

While debate on the similarity and/or the difference can be on-going, equality and equity “has become the central feature of political ideology”¹⁹⁴ because “a contemporary political ideology cannot have moral legitimacy unless in the background it has a commitment to the equal worth of every individual.”¹⁹⁵ Meanwhile, research has revealed that the discourse of equity with its political nature is applicable as a framework in explaining public-policy-making.¹⁹⁶ This will be further investigated in Chapter 6, when we discuss Hu Jintao’s harmonism in making educational equity more possible.

Schaffer rightly highlights that “[e]quity is a particular powerful theme” in the arguments and debates of public policy (as will be argued in Chapter 6) since it is “a

¹⁹³ Ibid.,p.11.

¹⁹⁴ Turner, B.S. (1986) *Equality*. Ellis Horwood: Sussex, England., p.19.

¹⁹⁵ Miliband, E. (2005) “Does inequality matter?” in A. Giddens and P. Diamond. (eds) *The New Egalitarianism*. Polity Press: Cambridge, England., p. 42.

¹⁹⁶ For a more detailed discussion, see Tyler, T., Boeckmann, R., Smith, H. and Huo,Y. (1997) *Social Justice in a Diverse Society*. Westview Press: Oxford, England, p.52.

justification for the public intervention designed to promote greater equality or greater welfare than would be realised through the forces of the market.”¹⁹⁷ The dialectical dynamic between public intervention and market forces provides an appropriate point of entry for the later part of this study. Schaffer’s statement on equity is helpful in solidifying the core arguments of this study, which are - 1) the dialectical endeavour of Deng Xiaoping was not favourable for establishing an equitable context for the implementation of rural compulsory education and 2) a shift of the dialectical endeavour by Hu Jintao, forming the ideological discourse of “harmonism”, has incorporated equity and justice as the core values of official Socialist Chinese ideology, allowing an equitable context for the enhancement of rural compulsory educational provision. To Schaffer, “[e]quity as a concept and practice is above all a political fact. It is an *ideological construct* about distribution, about the apportionment of resources in society, and therefore political in the sense of an intervention in the struggle of political ideas.”¹⁹⁸

As pointed out earlier, equity is a multi-faceted concept. While equity “involves ideas of equal outcomes or equal treatment as between individuals”,¹⁹⁹ it maintains

¹⁹⁷ Schaffer, B. (1981) *Can Equity Be Organized?* Gower Publishing: Hampshire, U.K., p.1.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. p.2.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p.1.

an intrinsic contradiction with “the nature of public action itself”²⁰⁰ which “entails differentiation in every field—taxation, conscription, welfare payments and services, or whatever—rather than the blind, undifferentiating, random equality of the conventional picture of justice.”²⁰¹ Meanwhile, it is important to realise that resources which are committed in public policy have to be sustainable and “[t]he ‘importance’ of resources is itself an ideology, sensitive to variations.”²⁰² In this respect, Schaffer maintains, “the persistence of the distributive network represented by public policy requires institutional and ideological resources to resist the critical impact of the wear and tear of routine in the public arena. Otherwise there would be constant adjustment to change which is characteristic of the market, but not of public institutions.”²⁰³ Schaffer’s highlighting “resources is itself an ideology”, is very helpful in understanding the problems of rural educational inequity in Deng Xiaoping’s era because of the fact that “lack of funding for rural compulsory education” is in itself an ideology that “rural compulsory education is not important”. Having a policy of compulsory education for all school-age children in the state requires a practical ideology of “funding for all” to initiate action. The modernisation-led economism of Deng is biased towards the urban areas and does

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid., p.8.

²⁰³ Ibid.

not provide consistent ideological resources in terms of “funding for all” to sustain the maintenance of the policy. This will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

Equity is a human spiritual pursuit, which aims for everlasting value. It is quite different from the discourse “those who are strong survive”. While equity is an ideal pursuit, it is a reflection of the objective existence of the equality of relationships. Under different social organisations, equity has different contents, different social groupings, different classes and different individuals and is shaped and reshaped continuously by social historical circumstances, social position, class and the ability of individuals. Prevalent in some ruling regimes of the world today, including the Communist regime of the PRC, the Marxian approach to (in)equity acts, in a key role, as the theoretical base and as an ideological doctrine. Marxism aims at the elimination, by the abolition of classes in society, of basic social inequity as produced by capitalism. In his challenge to the abstract concept on equality forwarded by Eugen Duhring, Engels argues that, “the idea of equality, both in its bourgeois and proletarian forms, is itself a product of history, created under definite historical circumstances, which again postulate a long historical background.

Therefore, equality is ‘anything but a timeless truth’.”²⁰⁴ In view of realistic demands for equity in his own era, Engels maintains: “the realistic content of proletarian equality is the demand for the removal of the classes. Every demand for equality which goes beyond that, leads necessarily to absurdity.”²⁰⁵ This voice of Engels represents the Marxian approach which is based on praxis that leads to social class abolition. This approach is extended into Mao Zedong’s leadership as will be revealed in the next chapter.

3.3 Educational Equity: Its meaning, connotation and character

Educational equity is the realisation of social equity within the field of education. Similarly to the discourse of social equity, educational equity is a dynamic historical discourse, a “truth” of historical specificity, the changes of which will depend on socio-historical development. Confucius of China advocates that teaching is not only for the elite, but for people from all walks of life,²⁰⁶ while ancient Greek’s citizenship education connotes ideas of democracy. Many political philosophers and educators (such as John Dewey, Christopher Jencks and James Coleman)

²⁰⁴ Quoted in Kolosi, T. and Wnuk-Lipinski, E. (ed.) (1983) *Equality and Inequality under Socialism*. Sage: London, England. p.2.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Section XXXVIII of Book Fifteen of Confucian *Analects*. Ezra Pound’s translation on this Confucian saying is: “...education has no snob division”. See Confucius (1956) *Confucian Analects*. trans. Ezra Pound. Peter Owen: London, U.K., p.106.

advocate the inclusion of equality into the field of education, seeking the way to educational equity. Since the end of the 18th century, the concept of educational equity has been enshrined in law in some Western countries; legally affirming that each and every individual has equal rights to receive education. Marx, in 1886, put forward the meaning and connotation of educational equity by stating that education is the normal requirement for human development and is a real benefit of each individual citizen.²⁰⁷

Education as a whole, and in its implementation in institutions and systems, plays a crucial role in defining the value of the society. This is especially valid with the “what is and what is not” of cultural worth since education belongs to the public sphere and is not a private property. At the same time, education forms a framework of social and political force in the public sphere. From his study showing that citizens with much formal education have considerable advantages over those who have received little; and that graduates from elite schools and colleges are favoured over those who are educated in the non-elite institutions, Bourdieu draws the conclusion that education regulates the distribution of privilege.²⁰⁸ Hence equity in education is

²⁰⁷ Marx and Engels (1979) *On Education*. People’s Education Publishing: Beijing, PRC., p.127. [This is in Chinese: 马克思恩格斯论教育, 人民教育出版社, 1979, p.127].

²⁰⁸ Bourdieu, P. (1996) *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*. trans. Lauretta Clough.

an important social issue since it has a role in mediating access to a multitude of cultural, social, economic and political benefits in society. Regarding compulsory education, the United Nations has established a Millennium target in which all children in the world should be able to receive full primary education by 2015, a decision within UN General Assembly Resolution, A/56/326 of September 6, 2001.²⁰⁹ Compulsory education is viewed as highly significant in realising the ideal of equity.

While many scholars and social activists advocate the idea of “equality of educational opportunity”, Coleman argues that, the concept is a mistaken and misleading one.²¹⁰ To Coleman, there is confusion over the term, which is centred on “the question of whether such equality implies equality of input of school resources or equality of results of schooling”. He maintains that the meaninglessness of “equality of educational opportunity” is due to its being positioned “within the educational institution”. Instead of being a means to an end to be achieved in adulthood, equality of opportunity is framed by many as an end in itself in the

Polity Press: Oxford, England.

²⁰⁹ UN General Assembly Resolution A/56/326

<<http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=13543>> (accessed on Jan 20, 2003).

²¹⁰ Coleman, J. (1975) “What is Meant by ‘an Equal Educational Opportunity’?”. in *Oxford Review of Education*. Vol. 1, No.1, p.28.

educational process. In seeing “equality of educational opportunity” as not being achievable, Coleman suggests that the term “reduction in inequality” rather than “equality” should be used,²¹¹ so as to re-direct people’s conceptual orientation and course of action. As the dynamics of the environment outside the school system is unequal, it is the school’s concern to “reduce the unequalizing impact on adult life of these differential environments”.²¹² This is in line with the concept of “education offers to counter inequalities in other social institutions and systems.”²¹³ Here we have to note that education is “a long-run determinant of income.”²¹⁴ Education, especially more opportunity for advanced education, is viewed as helping to reduce income inequality and to alleviate poverty. As pointed out by Lee, the “expansion of education will negatively affect inequality” and “[e]ducation has repeatedly been proven to be the most consistent and significant predictor of future earnings for individuals”.²¹⁵ Its contribution to employability and future income levels of students has pushed public policy to incorporate compulsory education as one of the basic needs.

²¹¹ Ibid., p.29.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Baker, J., Lynch, K., Cantillon, S. and Walsh, J. (2009) *Equality: From Theory to Action*. Palgrave MacMillan: Hampshire, U.K., p.142.

²¹⁴ Stewart, C. Jr., (1998) *Inequality and Equity: Economics of Greed, Politics of Envy, Ethics of Equality*. Greenwood Press: Westport, Connecticut., p.145.

²¹⁵ Lee, P. (2008) “Widening Gap of Educational Opportunity? A Study of the Changing Patterns of Educational Attainment in China” in Wan, G. (ed.) *Inequity and Growth in Modern China*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, U.K., p.180.

Levin has pointed out, in his research on educational opportunity and social injustice in Western Europe in the 1970s, that there are four aspects to the evaluation of equality of educational opportunity, namely “ i) equality of educational access, ii) equality of educational participation, iii) equality of educational results, and iv) equality of educational effects on life chances”.²¹⁶ Explicitly, Levin makes his critique through focusing on the effect of social structure on accessing education. For him, class and gender are basic given foundations of the social structure. In the 1970s, more widespread educational provision had allowed a higher proportion of the working class to receive education. Yet, due to the slow economic growth in the period after the war, those educated members of the working class had to face a more critical jobless situation than those who had a similar education but were from other classes. The resulting different effect on life chances, despite similar educational input would cause an impact on the future equality of educational opportunity. The research of Boudon & Lagneau also highlights that the rapid expansion of education after World War II in Western Europe had not automatically produced social justice.²¹⁷ The findings of Levin and Boudon & Lagneau have led others to recognise that research has to be shifted from the concept of educational (in)equity

²¹⁶ Levin, H. (1976) “Educational Opportunity and Social Inequality in Western Europe”. in *Social Problems*. Vol. 24, 2, Dec., pp.148-172.

²¹⁷ Boudon, R. & Lagneau, J. (1980) “Inequality of Educational Opportunity in Western Europe”. *Prospects*. Vol. 10 (2) , pp.181-188.

itself to the mechanism of educational (in)equity. This thesis, however, takes a different route by attempting to research the impact of the transformation of discourses on educational (in)equity in the PRC.

By making use of Levin's model of evaluation of equality of educational opportunity, an attempt is made here to develop an understanding of educational equity from the following perspectives:

i. Access:

From the perspective of the starting point of education, equity points to the equal right to receive education. Irrespective of nationality, ethnicity, gender, occupation, wealth (or the lack of it), religion, all human beings have the right to start their learning life, reflected in the freedom of a right to request and to receive education. Equity is not equivalent to equality. Educational equity is realised in "everyone has an equal right to education" and "everyone has a right to equal education". Although the nine-year compulsory education policy of the PRC has been implemented and the law enacted for over two decades, the outcome has not been as positive as originally envisioned.

Educational starting-point equity also includes the concept of equal opportunity for education. Equal opportunity for education points to equal opportunity for development and competition for those entering and participating in the activities of educational institutions. As a fundamental concept of contemporary education, equal opportunity for education aims to allow the under-privileged social class to obtain opportunities and conditions for self-development through access to educational resources,, even-though they are in a socially disadvantaged position.

ii. Participation:

While the right and opportunity for education is a starting point for school-age children, equity in the educational process is a continuation from the educational starting-point equity. Process inequity, in fact, is more difficult to evidence. Educational process equity emphasises fairness in the age limit, the learning content, conditions of teaching and related facilities and quality of teachers. No

one is to be privileged, nor should anyone be discriminated against. The input of educational resources, the attitude of teachers to students, educational concepts and teaching methods all have a direct impact on the personality, psychology and academic achievement of the students. Meanwhile, the equity of treatment towards teachers has an important bearing on the student and the teachers themselves in the process of education. The vast differences between urban and rural settings, coastal regions and inland areas, as well as among different schools have become an important issue in the assurance of educational process equity in the People's Republic of China.

iii. Results

Educational attainment equity is reflected by the students' attainment, after a prescribed period of time, of a certain level of acquired knowledge, an improvement in self-ability and moral standards against a predetermined standard, in order that they may fully develop their potential. Educational attainment equity recognises individual differences and hence attempts to provide differentiated

education to match the students' natural ability.

iv. Effect on Life Chances

The education system is able to minimise the impact of the social origins of students such as family wealth, educational background, political allegiance, social networks and the like so that these do not affect their possibility of achieving a particular level of wealth, education, political power and social connections in the future. In Rawls' words, "society must give more attention to those with fewer native assets and to those born into the less favourable social position. The idea is to redress the bias of contingencies in the direction of equality."²¹⁸ To improve equity, the education system has to be designed to minimise the reinforcing effect of the status of parents on the ultimate attainment of the students. In the case of the PRC, students from rural areas are less likely to be admitted into more prestigious higher institutions and get into more remunerative jobs.²¹⁹

²¹⁸ Rawls, J. (1971) *A Theory of Justice*. The Belknap Press: Cambridge, Mass., pp.100-101.

²¹⁹ There was TV documentary on this subject and Wan-peng Lei has highlighted this subject in his "Research on urban-rural disparity in the midst of demand on higher education" in Lei, W. (2007) *Case Research on Focal Problems of Chinese Rural Education*. Huazhong University of Science & Technology Press: Wuhan, PRC., pp.213-229. [This is in Chinese: 「我国高等教育需求中的城乡差异研究」在雷万鹏. *中国农村教育焦点问题实证研究*. 华中科技大学出版社, 2007, 213-229.]

3.4 Educational Inequity Dominated by the Urban-Rural Divide

Public policy makers have always been challenged to strike a balance between economic and social objectives. This policy dilemma has been a difficult task for many developing countries and the PRC is no exception. Being a socialist state, the conflict between the need for economic growth and the ideological position, and hence the inherent political issues, of the alleviation of inequities has been particularly acute in the PRC.

The People's Republic of China Education Law article 9 mandates citizens of the state to have the right and obligation to receive education.²²⁰ Citizens, irrespective of their ethnicity, gender, occupation, wealth status, religious background, enjoy equal opportunities to receive education. Meantime, the People's Republic of China Law on Compulsory Education section #5 mandates every child of six years of age, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, to enter school to receive a 9 year term of compulsory education, including 6 years of primary schooling and 3 years of junior secondary schooling.²²¹

²²⁰ *Education Law of the People's Republic of China*. (adopted at the third session of the Eighth National People's Congress on March 8, 1995) (2004) Law Publishing: Beijing, PRC.

²²¹ *Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China*. (adopted at the fourth session of the Sixth National People's Congress on April 12, 1986, and effective as of July 1, 1986) (2004) Law Publishing: Beijing, PRC.

In the spirit of equity, the law has made it clear that all children should have an equal opportunity to receive education and implies the following:

- all children are politically equal: for whatever reason, no one should deprive the right of anyone to receive education
- all children have an equal starting point in receiving education; it is presumed they all enter the same type of school
- there is equity in the process. In the process of education, all students receive instruction from teachers of similar quality, study a similar curriculum with similar teaching facilities and for a similar period of time.
- there is equity in the result, which is the highest level of educational equity, in which students from different backgrounds are able to develop in a similar way.

Despite the legal provision, in reality there are huge differences in conditions, quality and quantity of education delivered to the students. Li and Tsang's research reveals that "[i]n China, substantial educational disparities exist between urban and rural, coastal and inland regions, and males and females" and that "these disparities

[are] significant education problems because of their negative implications for socio-economic equality and equity.”²²²

The nurturing of educational equity is recognised as a continuous process of development, which will not be achieved swiftly. The state, meantime, has the responsibility to limit educational inequity to within a certain boundary and to continuously narrow the gap between the better off and the worse off. Since the 1949 inception of the People’s Republic of China, the CCP has endeavoured to formulate educational policies which would, on the one hand, accommodate the economic growth needed to reach the ideals of the communist regime and on the other hand hold on to the ideological ideal of building an equitable state. The encounters of the CCP have exemplified the obstacles of reconciling pragmatic economic policies and idealistic communist social objectives. The basic principle of economics applies here. Economic scarcity mandates that policies which are aimed at promoting rapid economic expansion compete directly for resources with social policies that are targeted to enhance social opportunities for the under-privileged.

²²² Li, D. and Tsang, M.C. (2003) “Household Decisions and Gender Inequality in Education in Rural China”. in *China: An International Journal*. Vol. 1, No. 2 (Sept. 2003), p.225.

There has been repeated repositioning of the priorities of the economic and social agenda and objectives. The ideological footing, which guides the leading logic of decision making by the leaders for educational policies, has manifested the repositioning, tensioned between a socialist egalitarian paradigm and a capitalist competitive paradigm. Attempts in the early years of the PRC were made to merge the ideal egalitarian social goals with the need for economic expansion. However, during the Cultural Revolution, between 1966-1976, there was an upheaval of the leftist ideological target in educational policy-making, followed by an unbalanced effort in economic development in the Deng era. Ideological purpose, political agenda and educational initiatives form an interlinked web. Ideological transformation and political priorities influencing education policy have oscillated quite drastically in different phases of the primary stage of Chinese socialism. As a result, structures for educational opportunity for rural and urban students have differed significantly. Each of the first four generations of CCP leaders has faced unique historical situations that led them to different dialectical outcomes for ideological and political agendas for education. These will be analysed in the following chapters.

3.5 Conclusion

Equity, as a normative concept and ideological construct, indicates and demands that fair services, opportunities and access are distributed across groups of people according to their need. It is a core feature of ideo-political discourse with a legitimising power pointing to the equality of the social, political and economical status of social members, the compliance of social and political norms, sharing of equal social and political rights and aiming for the achievement of social justice. Equity demands a justification for public intervention to promote greater equality than would be realised through market forces.

Arguably, educational inequity has been dominated by the urban-rural divide in China. Rural poverty had prevented many school-age children from getting access to education. Even those who managed to attend school did not receive quality education due to sub-standard facilities and sub-qualified teachers, leading to inequity of educational participation. The below-average educational level of rural students reveals attainment inequity; and when researches showed that rural students had less opportunity for higher education and for higher-paid jobs, life chance inequity started to become alarming.

Equity in education is an important social issue because it has a role in mediating access to a multitude of cultural, social, economic and political benefits in society. The socialist ideology has provided guidelines in the formulation of educational policies throughout the different phases of the initial stage of Chinese Socialism in the PRC. However, interpretation of the core ideology and the challenges from marketism, globalism and elitism as well as adjustments in the political sphere, tensioned between a socialist egalitarian paradigm and a capitalist competitive paradigm, have been manifest in the repositioning of the various trends in ideological purpose, political agenda and educational initiatives, resulting in the changes of the CCP's attempts to reduce educational inequity.

After defining an understanding of the concepts of equity and educational equity and highlighting the educational inequity of differences in urban-rural provision, we shall proceed to analyse the ideo-political discourses of the Mao, Deng and post-Deng eras which immensely impact on educational equity.

Chapter Four

Chinese Marxism: the influence of Mao with reference to rural educational (in)equity

The concept of governmentality guides us to conceptualise power not through the imposition of violence but as a process of governance, which influences the actions of the masses, in China primarily through the CCP. It represents a shift of the focus of power from an institutional body to the context of actions. In this study, of the changing ideological discourses in the PRC which impact on educational inequity, it is about situating various forms of Chinese Marxism, for the purpose of addressing inequity, under different periods of political leadership.

The Maoist discourse of revolution-led proletarianism as a “truth” critically affects educational (in)equity, which does not come from a vacuum but is an outcome of political activity. In order to appreciate these political endeavours, starting from the intricate processes of political decision-making and policy formulation to the cynical exercise of power, there is a need to comprehend the historical forms of political rationality, masked in the form of “truth”, as promulgated by political leaders. Politics, even in the most extreme actions of the exercise of power and domination, is never without some consideration of “thought”, which is an essential

element of political rationality. At the same time, political rationality is not a simple outcome of the “interests” of the leadership, or its capacity for rational choice, but is a result of historically cultivated and adjusted forms of rationality. In this sense, political rationality leads to political action and is concurrently a condition of it. This formation of political rationality becomes a vital part of the ideological positioning of policy. Educational (in)equity issues are not so much about the state, but the ways in which “the art of government”, and the political rationality that advances it, create various forms of experiences for the leadership and the modes of political justification. We are concerned here with how educational (in)equity is created and governed in relation to the construction of “truth”. Educational (in)equity can be understood as outcome of different knowledge/power formations and their attempts to construct alternative versions of truth.

Accordingly, there is a discursive web of thought that directs the construction of “truth”. This chapter argues that Chinese Marxism provides a background context for addressing educational (in)equity in the Mao and subsequent eras. Ideological dialectics of globalism and localism, as a web of thought creating “truth”, plays a prime role in setting the political discourse of Maoism and consequently affects

educational (in)equity in the PRC. The communist proletarian revolution within Marxist theory is grounded in the discourse of globalism because Marx theorises that the success of the working class globally is based on the united actions of proletariats in different parts of the world. Communism is associated with the dynamics of globalism as it anticipates a movement with global dimensions. At the same time, localism and globalism form a dialectical unity, in the sense that local measures are required for the realisation of communism. The realisation of communism in different countries is different because of localised “historical inevitability”,²²³ by which it is meant that unique local conditions of individual countries create different and unique ways of realising communism.

This chapter firstly discusses the existence of educational inequity specifically under Mao’s leadership. The production of a “truth” for the justification of educational inequity is then analysed from the Maoist perspectives of the ideological dialectics of globalism and localism within the context of the development of Chinese Marxism. Finally, an understanding of the relationship between ideo-political activity and educational inequity in Mao’s era is elicited.

²²³ Marx, K. “Letter to Vera Sassoulitch” in McLellan, D. (ed.) (1997) *Karl Marx: Selected Writing*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, U.K., p.576.

4.1 Educational Inequity in Mao's era

Marxism entered China with a promise of justice and material affluence. However, educational inequity persisted. In this study, educational inequity in Mao's era is identified in two periods—the early years of the revolution and then the period termed as the Cultural Revolution.

4.1.1 The Early Years (1949-1965)

Under the leadership of Mao, educational policies were formulated with a political agenda of both economic growth and social equity. The CCP inherited a country with a lack of resources and an out-dated educational system, in which fewer than forty per cent of school-aged children were enrolled.²²⁴ As far as literacy is concerned, it was estimated that about 85 per cent of the population was illiterate.²²⁵ Anchored to the communist ideology, social policies were formulated to address this deficiency in education; the main emphasis was on the expansion of basic education for the population to help build up the country and promote industrial construction and economic growth.²²⁶ From 1949 to 1965, the number of primary schools

²²⁴ Lofstedt, J.I. (1980) *Chinese Educational Policy*. Humanities Press: Atlantic Highlands, N.J., p.68.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Hu, S.M. and Seifman, E. (ed.) (1976) *Toward a New World Outlook: A Documentary History of Education in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1976*. AMS Press: New York, N.Y.

increased from 346,749 to 1,681,939 (an increase of 3.85 times).²²⁷ Likewise, the number of normal secondary schools jumped from 4,045 to 18,102 (a 3.47 fold increase); not including the total 61,626 units of vocational/agricultural secondary schools in 1965.²²⁸ The total number of primary students enrolled increased from 24.4 million in 1949 to 116 million in 1965 and the total number of normal secondary students enrolled jumped from 1 million to 9.3 million in the same period.²²⁹ Expenditure per student was also pushed up: the expenditure per primary student increased 85 per cent from 1952 to 1965 while an increase of 50 per cent was reported for the same period for secondary students.²³⁰

From a relatively low starting point, educational opportunities for basic schooling were expanded country wide in the first decade of the PRC. This was in line with both the communist ideological doctrine of reducing class differences and the pragmatic national development policy of nurturing a skilled workforce. However, this was not without concern from the leaders and the policy makers, even from the early stage of their coming into power, about the need to address the issue of scarcity

²²⁷ Source: *Education Statistical Data I* edited by National Taiwan Normal University Education Research Centre in 1992. Publisher: Normal University Press, Taiwan., p.13. [This is in Chinese: 教育統計資料 I 國立臺灣師範大學教育研究中心 主編。師大書苑有限公司印行。1992 年。頁 13。]

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid., p.20.

²³⁰ Yao, Y.B. (1984) *China Education 1949-1982*. Wah Fung Publishing: Hong Kong., p.140. [This is in Chinese: 姚若冰編著。中國教育 1949-1982。華風書局。香港。1984 年。頁 140。]

of resources. Unger and Lo have, in their respective articles, pointed out that the communist regime had chosen to take advantage of the quicker returns from developments in the prevailing urban secondary and tertiary educational systems and structures instead of realising a more equitable establishment of educational infrastructure.²³¹ The conflict between the demand to supply highly skilful technologists, engineers, scientists and administrators from tertiary educational institutions for industrial development and a more egalitarian ideology became more pronounced in the late 1950s.²³² The reality at that point in time was that only very limited resources were made available for basic educational expansion since the priority was given to urban education at a higher level. Based on the view that “key-point” schools,²³³ although small in number, were more likely to turn out faster results, these were prioritised to receive resources. On the other hand, rural education was organised to prepare educated workers and farmers.

²³¹ Unger, J. (1980) “Bending the School Ladder: The Failure of Chinese Educational Reform in the 1960s”. in *Comparative Education Review*. Vol. 24, pp.221-237; Lo, B. (1984) “Primary Education: A Two Track System for Dual Tasks” in R. Hayhoe (ed.) *Contemporary Chinese Education*. Croom Helm: Sydney, Australia., pp.47-64.

²³² Thogersen has pointed out that the number of university entrants, until 1957, had outnumbered the number of graduates from senior middle schools. See Thogersen, S. (1990) *Secondary Education in China after Mao: Reform and Social Conflict*. Aarhus University Press: Aarhus, Denmark., p.22.

²³³ “Key-point” schools are those chosen by the government to educate students of a higher calibre and those of special groups, such as children of officials. They are identified by the government as important education institutions and the best resources are allocated to them. In contemporary terms, they are equivalent to elite schools.

The year 1958 became a turning point in Chinese politics as the “leftists” held more power. The Great Leap Forward was advanced to meet the need to create speedy economic and industrial growth. Radical leftist activity, which included the mobilisation of grassroots labour, peasants, collectivisation, the commune structure and the intermixing of schooling with large-scale productive work, were all initiated. Educational policies were politicised. Educational policy-making was dominated by the political agenda of the proletariat, resulting in a situation where politics and physical labour increasingly interfused with the curriculum.²³⁴ The expansion of basic education and the rapid development of secondary and tertiary education became a dual goal of the country. Educational policy-makers formulated a strategy termed “walking with two legs” in which initiatives for alternative forms of education were promoted in parallel with the more traditional systems.²³⁵ One of the two legs was the more traditional route of operating schools by the government and people’s communes. The other leg refers to those alternative forms of education including spare-time education programmes.

New experimental initiatives were tried out in the communes. While rural

²³⁴ Hu, S.M. and Seifman, E. (ed.) (1976) *Toward a New World Outlook: A Documentary History of Education in the People’s Republic of China, 1949-1976*. AMS Press: New York, N.Y..p.90.

²³⁵ Ibid.

primary and secondary schools were combined and their terms shortened, the number of schools providing mid-level technical training, such as agricultural middle schools and work-study classes expanded.²³⁶ This resulted in a rapid expansion in enrolment before the Great Famine. In 1957, the number of primary schools was 547,306; this grew by over 22 per cent to 668,318 in 1962.²³⁷ In the same period, the number of normal secondary schools grew from 11,096 to 19,521 in the midst of seeing the establishment of 3,715 agricultural/vocational secondary schools in 1962 from a record of nil in 1957.²³⁸

As the Great Leap Forward movement turned out to be a failure, alongside the Great Famine in the early 1960s, the policy of walking on two legs went through substantive change. The CCP leaders, headed by Liu Shaoqi who took up the post of president of the state upon Mao's stepping down after the Lushan meetings as a result of his failure of the Great Leap Forward, demanded a reversion to less zealous strategies for industrial and economic growth.²³⁹ Liu Shaoqi allied with Deng Xiaoping as the leadership team both worked together "during the 1962-65 period on

²³⁶ Lofstedt, J. (1980) *Chinese Educational Policy*. Humanities Press: Atlantic Highlands, N.J., p.71.

²³⁷ Source: *Education Statistical Data I* edited by National Taiwan Normal University Education Research Centre in 1992. Publisher: Normal University Press, Taiwan., p.13. [This is in Chinese: 教育統計資料 I 國立臺灣師範大學教育研究中心 主編。 師大書苑有限公司印行。 1992 年。頁 13。]

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Wang, J. (1999) *Contemporary Chinese Politics: An Introduction (6th ed.)*. Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, N.J., p.24-25

Party rectification, rural policy, educational reform, and generally formulating the post-Great Leap recovery programme”.²⁴⁰ Subsequently, educational policies moved toward an emphasis on educational quality with many of the substandard *minban*²⁴¹ and other schools closing, particularly in rural villages.²⁴² The major objectives of educational policies for the rural areas remained as the eradication of illiteracy and the training of mid-level skilled technical labour.²⁴³

4.1.2 The Cultural Revolution (1966-1977)

The year 1966 marked the beginning of a far-reaching and chaotic political movement, often termed as the “Cultural Revolution”. Within this movement from 1966 to 1977, an exhaustive implementation of revolutionary educational policies was witnessed, through a leftist political programme. Mao Zedong in his political power struggle, proclaimed the beginning of a new educational scheme with a primary objective of eliminating the difference between the peasantry and the rest of the country.²⁴⁴ Instead of the traditional examination-based progress system, Mao

²⁴⁰ Shambaugh, D. (1995) “Deng Xiaoping: The Politician” In Shambaugh, D. (ed.) *Deng Xiaoping: Portrait of a Chinese Statesman*. Oxford University Press: Oxford; New York., p.60.

²⁴¹ Literally, “*minban*” means “privately operated”. It is not surprising to learn that the *minban*, privately operated schools, are substandard because of the lack of official support and resources.

²⁴² Kwong, J. (1979) *Chinese Education in Transition: Preclude to the Cultural Revolution*. McGill-Queens University Press: Montreal, Quebec., pp.31- 35 and 117-129.

²⁴³ The rural illiteracy was at about 66 percent in 1960. See Lofstedt, J. (1980) *Chinese Educational Policy*. Humanities Press: Atlantic Highlands, N.J., p.105-122.

²⁴⁴ Deng, Z. and Treiman, D. (1997) “The Impact of the Cultural Revolution on Trends in Educational Attainment in the People’s Republic of China”. in *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 103,

demanded a structure in which recommendations, based on class background and ideological orientation, as well as political loyalty and performance from political officials, should serve as the basic criterion of determining progress in the education system. Throughout the country, the ideological pursuit of class elimination dominated the curriculum and the classroom.²⁴⁵ Key-point schools, vocational training colleges and the examination-based progression tracking system were all abolished. The educational structure was consolidated to one in which all students, in principle, learned the same curriculum in a structured hierarchy (5 years of primary school, 3 years of junior secondary school and 2 years of senior secondary school) for 10 years under intensive ideological orientation.²⁴⁶ Under the criteria that physical labour, ideological conformity and political loyalty superseded academic achievement, the relationship between education and career development was disconnected.²⁴⁷ While the quality of education deteriorated during the Cultural Revolution,²⁴⁸ educational policies within this period enhanced the provision of

pp.391-428.

²⁴⁵ Sun, H. and Johnson, D. (1990) "From Ti-Yong to Gaige to Democracy and Back Again: Education's Struggle in Communist China". in *Contemporary Education* Vol. 61., pp.209-214. And Thomas, R.M. (1986) "Political Rationales, Human Development Theories, and Educational Practice". in *Comparative Education Review*. Vol.30, pp.299-320.

²⁴⁶ Thøgersen, S. (1990) *Secondary Education in China after Mao: Reform and Social Conflict*. Aarhus University Press: Aarhus, Denmark. p.27.

²⁴⁷ Unger, J. (1984) "Severing the Links between Education and Careers: The Sobering Experience of China's Urban Schools" in J. Oxenham (ed.) *Education versus Qualifications? A study of Relationships between Education, Selection for Employment, and the Productivity of Labor*. Allen & Unwin: Boston, MA., pp. 176-191.

²⁴⁸ Pepper and Unger have provided a detailed discussion of the quality of education in this period. See Pepper, S. (1996) *Radicalism and Educational Reform in Twentieth Century China: The*

mass education for the underprivileged, the peasants included. Enrolment in primary and junior secondary schools reached a new high of over 90 per cent by the early 1970s. Up until this point, rural basic education was centrally planned and administered by the national government with unified financial management support for education. Paradoxically, this was a period of ambivalence because in the midst of the deterioration of educational quality, there was an expansion of educational provision.

4.2 Maoist Web of Thought

Governmentality as a concept enables an analysis of the techniques and tactics in the form of thoughts, which constitutes a complex form of power exercised over the masses. The Maoist discursive web of thought is presented here as complex interweaving of multivalent discourses and strategies. Concurrently, it is argued that the dialectical relationship of Marxist globalism and localism contributes to its formation.

Euro-centric Marxism,²⁴⁹ as a foreign ideology and in the form of a new kind of

Search for an Ideal Development Model. Cambridge University Press: New York, N.Y. pp.401-413. And Unger, J. (1984) "Severing the Links between Education and Careers: The Sobering Experience of China's Urban Schools" in J. Oxenham (ed.) *Education versus Qualifications? A study of Relationships between Education, Selection of Employment, and the Productivity of Labor*. Allen & Unwin: Boston, MA., pp.176-191.

²⁴⁹ Marxism is essentially Euro-centric because Marx's investigation and theory formulation are based primarily on European observations. See Marx, K. (1977) "Letter to Vera Sassoulitch" in

knowledge and “truth”, started to enter China in the early 20th century in a fragmented form since there were only very few translations of Marx’s writings available in Chinese and there were different interpretations of these texts. The channels available to acquire a holistic view of Marx’s writings and theory were limited. It was only from the Yan’an period (1935-1947) that Chinese Marxism started to take on a coherent form—a form that was linked up from the fragmented pieces of understanding, interpretation and praxis in the course of history. It carried with it a rural nature and was nurtured from the experiences of the communists with the revolution grounded in rural China. The early formulation of Chinese Marxism was the dialectical synthesis of Mao Zedong, his cadres and a group of Marxist intellectuals. The synthesis was first described as “making Marxism Chinese” (or the sinification of Marxism), based on a speech by Mao in late 1938. Its aim was to digest and internalise the form and content of Marxism in the Chinese way. Since then, the Chinese Communists have consistently described “making Marxism Chinese” as the integration of the universal principles of Marxism with the concrete circumstances of Chinese society. It has specific national characteristics. To be functional, the format of Chinese Marxism must be in the Chinese configuration.²⁵⁰

McLellan, D. (ed.) *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, U.K., p.576.

²⁵⁰ Mao Tse-tung (1965) “On New Democracy” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung Vol. II*. Foreign Language Press: Beijing, PRC., pp.380-381.

There is a need to seek theoretical and empirical understanding of the dynamics of communism in China and its implication for the enduring question of political legitimacy which is understood as the subjective perception about the rightfulness of exercising political control. Marxism provides an analytical framework for the CCP to the study of China.

Taking note of the complexity of events that took place in China, in particular, the prolonged political instability in the country, the CCP advocated that the issue of political legitimacy must be understood within the context of Chinese cognitive patterns. There was therefore the need to expand Marxist theoretical and empirical scope to account for political tradition in China. The mastering of this new knowledge/truth is perceived as the way to gain power. This is valid because power and knowledge are mutually productive.²⁵¹

Dirlik pointedly says: “Chinese Marxism is not however merely an application of Marxist theory to the circumstances of China. It is best understood as a localized or vernacular version of a global Marxism that claimed a subject position for itself

²⁵¹ Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. ed. C. Gordon. trans. C. Gordon *et al.*, The Harvester Press: Brighton, Sussex.

within a universalized Marxist discourse.”²⁵² Marxism is not viewed as a fixed dogma but a theory and method of understanding the world that would be refined and /or re-configured as it was introduced to new countries.

With this in mind, we shall proceed to argue that, a creation of “truth” is directed by a discursive web of thought formed by the dialectic of globalism-localism of the leader and then study the essentials of Maoist educational discourse(s). It is argued that the “truth” created by the discourse of revolution-led proletarianism has changed the idea of educational equity to be interpreted as “everyone to becoming proletariat”.

4.2.1 Marxist Globalism and Localism

Globalism is one of the core concepts in the ideology of Marxism. Marx and Engels, in *The German Ideology*, point out that, for “alienation”²⁵³ to become “an ‘intolerable’ power, i.e. a power against which men make a revolution, it must necessarily have rendered the great mass of humanity ‘propertyless’, and have

²⁵² Dirlik, A. (1994) *After the Revolution: Waking to Global Capitalism*. University Press of New England: Hanover, NH, p.31.

²⁵³ Alienation refers to the lack of unity between human and the world. Marx is concerned with the ultimate unity of human and the world so that human may achieve its fullest potential. The root cause of human alienation is found in the necessity for human to earn a salary for living.

produced, at the same time, the contradiction of an existing world of wealth and culture, both of which conditions presuppose a great increase in productive power and a high degree of development.”²⁵⁴ Marx and Engels envision the global alleviation of alienation, the building up of material abundance and eventually a humane global society (we shall discuss the appeal of this to China in subsequent chapters).

The high level development of productive forces makes human beings exist “world-historically” instead of merely regionally—Marx and Engels direct people to see the matter from a global perspective.²⁵⁵ Here there is an anticipation of global inter-connectedness and inter-dynamics that takes mankind to a new stage. Indeed, Marx and Engels put forward a discourse of globalism in their theory of communism. Without the globalisation movement, they contend that communism could only exist in a local dimension and that global development of the forces of intercourse is prohibited. Local communism in one country, in their views, is not the path to full humanity. For Marx and Engels, “[t]he working men have no country”²⁵⁶ because

²⁵⁴ Marx, K. (1977) “The German Ideology” in McLellan, D. (ed.) *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, U.K., p.170.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., p.171.

²⁵⁶ Marx, K. (1977) “The Communist Manifesto” in McLellan, D. (ed.) *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, U.K., p.235.

for working men to become proletariat, there must be the establishment of a globalised system.²⁵⁷ As Levitas has pointed out: “.....the Marxist perspective is universalistic. For this perspective envisages a world movement, socialism with international dimensions.”²⁵⁸ Communism carries with it the dynamic towards globalism.

“Localization accompanies globalization.”²⁵⁹ Marxism realises the importance of the characteristics of the local in order to integrate localities into the paradigm of the global. While in the minds of Marx and Engels “communism is only possible as the act of the dominated people ‘all at once’ and simultaneously”²⁶⁰ and cannot occur alone in one country—emphasising communist revolution through globalised transformation, there exists a dialectic of globalism and localism. Indeed, Marx points out that the proletariat makes use of “its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State.”²⁶¹ With regard to the developmental process of

²⁵⁷ Ibid., p.235-236.

²⁵⁸ Levitas, M. (1974) *Marxist Perspectives in the Sociology of Education*. Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, England., p.197.

²⁵⁹ Dirlik, A. (2000) *Postmodernity's Histories: the past as legacy and project*. Rowman & Littlefield: Lanham, Maryland, p.63.

²⁶⁰ Marx, K. (1977) “The German Ideology” In McLellan, D. (ed.) *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, U.K., p.171.

²⁶¹ Marx, K. (1977) “The Communist Manifesto” in McLellan, D. (ed.) *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, U.K., p.237.

communist revolution, the “measures will of course be different in different countries”,²⁶² setting the platform for a discourse of localism. Marx’s “materialist conception of history was not some sort of ‘formula’ that could be applied irrespective of particular circumstance.”²⁶³ In other words, it is circumstance-specific and it has to be localised.

The reason for Marx putting forward a discourse of localism within his globalised Communism is about action to change the world.²⁶⁴ A discourse of localism with space- and time-specificity is to enable actions to change the world, initially at the country level and eventually to realise a globalised communism. Marx and Engels highlight that the communist supports, globally, all revolutionary movements which oppose bourgeois social and political systems and that communists ask for global union and co-ordination among democratic parties. For Marx, “[t]he proletarians.....have a world to win.”²⁶⁵ In Marxism, globalism and localism are associated together to form a dialectical unity. This allows the formulation of a new “truth” for China to pursue in the process of modernisation.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Marx, K. (1977) “Letter to Mikhailovsky” in McLellan, D. (ed.) *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, U.K., p.571.

²⁶⁴ Marx, K. (1977) “Theses on Feuerbach” in McLellan, D. (ed.) *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, U.K., p.158.

²⁶⁵ Marx, K. (1977) “The Communist Manifesto” in McLellan, D. (ed.) *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, U.K., p.246.

4.2.2 Mao's Dialectics and Chinese Marxism

Before we embark on the route to Mao's dialectics, it is helpful to use Foucault's archaeology as a tool in the analysis of the statements (of Mao) as they occur in the archive of the CCP,²⁶⁶ participating in a system of ideas and playing a role in organising ideological relations, bearing in mind that a function of the CCP is to act as an "ideological state apparatus". It "describes discourses as practices specified in the element of the archive"²⁶⁷ which is "the general system of the formation and transformation of statements";²⁶⁸ the CCP's general system being dialectics. Taken as a whole, the powerful voice of Mao Zedong as reflected in his works, including articles, speeches and other documents, is centred on his dialectical argument of contradiction, the conflict of opposites, which he sees as both omnipresent and a permanent character of social life. Societal changes are viewed as outcomes of the development of contradictions internal in society, the contradiction between classes, and the contradiction between relations and production. It is these contradictions that drive society to progress. Dialectics, however, does not exclude external causes but takes into account both external and internal causes. "The external causes are the condition of change and internal causes are the basis of

²⁶⁶ Foucault, M. (1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Tavistock: London, U.K., p.79.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., p.131.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., p.130.

change, the external causes become operative through internal causes.”²⁶⁹ Dialectics is utilised as a way of discovering “truth” by analytical consideration of opposites, both theoretically and practically.

As Marxism enters China, there is a need for a new knowledge, a new truth for the CCP to gain momentum in its progress in China. There is a new language to be learned—the language of the discourse of Marxism. The CCP knows only too well that it has to assimilate the spirit of the new knowledge and it will only be perceived as “true” if the party can freely express itself in it in a new language and when the party finds its way in it without forgetting the native tongue in the use of the new.²⁷⁰ For the CCP, the tension between learning a new globalising discourse of Marxism as a new knowledge and a new truth, and disregarding the traditional Chinese ideology, has been a basic problem in the politics of China. The Chinese communists are quite in agreement with the transformative role of Marxism in creating a new Chinese society, in the name of modernisation. However, they are always searching, with disagreement among the different factions of the CCP, for the best way to reconcile

²⁶⁹ Knight, N. (ed.) (1990) *Mao Zedong on Dialectical Materialism*. M.E. Sharpe: Armonk, New York., p.157.

²⁷⁰ Marx, K. (1999) “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte”(1852). in Toews. J. (ed.) *The Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels with Related Documents*. Bedford/St. Martin’s: Boston, MA., p.147-148.

the promises of the new vision that carried the Communists to power, with the responsibilities placed upon the CCP in managing the state. It should be noted here that there is a continuing contradiction between the ideology of Marxism that bases its discourse on a global ideal of an egalitarian and democratic society, and one that makes use of Marxism as an instrument of pragmatic goals for localised national development. It is a contradiction between the globalised discourse of vision and the localised discourse of economism.²⁷¹ There is always a tension and dialectics between the two. The localisation of a globalised Marxism in China must create a “truth” of its own. It is not the substitution of any illogical discourse for an existing one. Through this new “truth”, a new China is expected to transcend the old China. However, the new China is not expected to wipe out the old one. This is to be achieved by developing a new discourse—a new “truth” built out of the existing discourse at hand. Localisation of a globalised Marxism, that seeks to totally dismiss the past by declining to connect with the traditional Chinese discourse, is to put itself in danger. It does not only weaken its own source of credibility and intelligibility but also isolates itself from the context and reality of the transformation that it aims for. Such a dismissal will not strengthen the legitimacy of the CCP. Strategically, for a

²⁷¹ Economics is ideologically seen as a determinant factor in social change. Hoover has discussed different streams of economics from an ideological perspective. See Hoover, K. (2003) *Economics as Ideology*. Rowman & Littlefield: Lanham, Maryland.

leading discourse to have credibility and persuasive power, it has to make connections to the one before it so as to maintain legitimacy within the CCP. If it does not, the critical role of the CCP in the process of governmentality is undermined.

To build up a new “truth”, to localise in China a globalising Marxism, an in-depth mastering of the theories and political concepts of Marxism and the traditional Chinese philosophies and ideologies is essential. Mao is one who does both. In constructing a “truth” that legitimises, Mao attempts to use terms familiar to Chinese philosophy.²⁷² Mao’s Marxism is heavily influenced by traditional Chinese Confucian and Daoist dialectics. Of particular interest in this study is Mao’s worldview as revealed in his using *da-tong* to describe communism (we shall turn to this again in Chapter 6). *Da-tong* is a Confucian and Daoist term meaning grand together-ness, a great harmony of the world. It is Mao’s belief that Marxism provides the route by which the utopian vision of a world of great harmony is realised.²⁷³ Marxism is treated by Mao as an instrument in making an old Chinese dream come true by linking Marxism with the ancient ideologies of China. The traditional

²⁷² Mahoney, J.G. “On the Way to Harmony: Marxism, Confucianism, and Hu Jintao’s Hexie Concept” in Guo, S. and Guo, B. (2008) *China in Search of a Harmonious Society*. Lexington Books: Lanham, MD., p. 104.

²⁷³ Terrill, R. (1999) *Mao: A Biography*. Stanford University Press: Stanford, CA., p.227.

Chinese ideal is to seek for a world of great unity which is described as a worldly community in which the elderly are well cared for, working people are provided with jobs, school-age young people are educated and those with disabilities are cared for. In essence, it is a society in which equity prevails and people are provided for according to their needs. Does this depiction not provide affinity between the ancient Chinese ideal and the communist ideal?

The CCP had no immediate Marxist reference points for China but had to learn from the Russian experience. From this perspective, “Chinese Communism descends.....from Bolshevism”,²⁷⁴ as Deutschcer argues. Bolshevism hence forms a source of “truth” for Chinese Marxism. After the success of the revolution in Russia—the least developed industrial country of Europe in 1917, those enthusiastic Chinese who sought a means of revival for the country suddenly realised that a deteriorating Russia, in a world of globalised imperialism appeared to have found a “localised” survival resolution. Marxism arrived in China “in its Lenin’s form”²⁷⁵ and was further developed by Mao Zedong locally as the localised “truth”, an innovative “truth” for a higher stage in the development of universal revolutionary

²⁷⁴ Deutscher, I. (1966) *Ironies of History*. Oxford University Press: London, England., p.90.

²⁷⁵ Meisner, M. (1982) *Marxism Maoism and Utopianism*. The University of Wisconsin Press: Madison Wisconsin., p. 76.

theory.

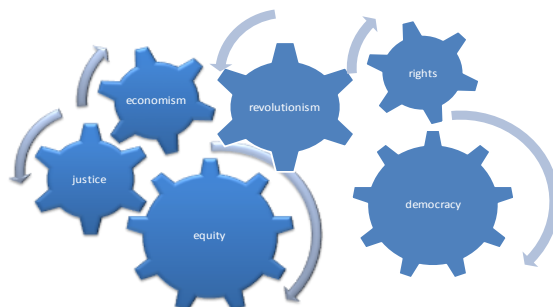
This new “truth” is internalised to fit the particular reality of China. There is the form and content of this “truth”. It is however only the form, the particular form which has a “definite cultural or national character”, that “ensures the practicability of Marxist-Leninist content in the objective reality of China” which has been localised.²⁷⁶ However, the Marxist-Leninist nature of the content remains unyielding.²⁷⁷ It remains a means of achieving greater humanity of human beings. Discourses such as justice, equity, democracy, liberty and rights continue to be formational discourses in the body of an ideological engine. We may illustrate the inter-relatedness of these discourses by symbolising each of the discourses as gears and cogs connected with each other as depicted in Figure 4.1. These gears (in reality discourses) within the ideological engine, are not independent but inter-related and dynamic, i.e. the motion of any particular gear, or discourse, is going to affect the others. The various motions (as represented by the arrows) of the gears are time- and space-specific in order to produce a particular “truth” at a specific historical point of time. By detailed formulation at any particular time, some particular discourse(s)

²⁷⁶ Chin, S. (1979) *The Thought of Mao Tse-Tung: Form and Content*. Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong: Hong Kong, p.6. [Mao Zedong and Mao Tse-Tung are merely different translations]

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

would become dominant and generate specific ideological outcome(s). Further explanation is to be given in the next paragraph.

Figure 4.1 : Discourses forming an ideological engine



To elaborate on this, the noteworthy concept of Foucault applies: truth is discourse-relative. Marxism, like other ideologies, is a combination of political discourses organised in a specific mode. It is itself a discourse with a distinguishable form, a specific way of organising a web, a collection of other political discourses such as equity, democracy, revolutionism, rights and justice, which are related dynamically with each other. To master it, to generate a useful “truth” out of it, there is a need to seek to identify, describe and analyse the web of discourses that constitute it, together with the relationship among them. These political discourses are expressed and signified in the form of words and statements, that is, discourses do not exist independently of words and statements. Marxism is in fact a system of meaning and form, a complex of thought-speech-text as its subject matter. It is not

merely abstract but is engaged in observable facts and in concrete social and political practices in the real world. These political discourses are positioned within a system of ideas concerning the understanding and shaping—either through changing or conserving—of the political world. The meaning of the words and statements is dependent on their relation to each other at a given point in time.

Marxism is a complex construct through which specific meanings are imparted to the wide range of political discourses they inevitably employ. Marxism, like other ideologies, constitutes semantic fields in that each component interacts with all others and is changed when any of the other components alters. These political discourses overlap and reinforce each other. Within the web of discourses, however, one discourse emerges as the dominant core. In relation to the meaning assigned by other discourses, this dominant discourse is purposefully positioned and is ascribed with legitimacy and/or illegitimacy.²⁷⁸

Construction of this “truth” is not without purpose. It is to allow the CCP as the “ideological state apparatus” to formulate discourse(s) that represent the party as

²⁷⁸ Gale, T. (1999) “Policy Trajectories: Treading the discourse path of policy analysis”. in *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*. Vol. 20 Issue 3, pp.393-407.

“part of the great Chinese nation, flesh of its flesh and blood of its blood”²⁷⁹ which appeals to the Chinese masses. “[T]alk about Marxism in isolation from China’s characteristics is merely Marxism in the abstract.”²⁸⁰ The new “truth” means “to apply Marxism concretely in China so that its every manifestation has an indubitably Chinese character.....foreign stereotypes must be.....replaced by fresh, lively Chinese style and spirit which the common people of China love.”²⁸¹ Mao’s dialectics of the globalisation and localisation of Marxism is not the separation of the two but their relationship. Dialectically it is the unity of processes of globalisation and localisation of Marxism. Mao proclaims: “To separate internationalist content from national form is the practice of those who do not understand the first thing about internationalism. We, on the contrary, must link the two closely.”²⁸² Mao goes to the various Marxian theories and concepts available at his time (bearing in mind only limited Marxist material was available in the Chinese language and Mao mastered no foreign language) and works on his dialectical analysis and how to apply this in the prevailing circumstances of his time. It involves cycles of clarification, qualification and re-configuration of discourse(s) that generate meaning to sustain Mao’s

²⁷⁹ Mao, Zedong. (2003) “The Role of The Chinese Communist Party in the National War”. in *Selected Articles of Mao Tse-Tung*. New Vistas Publications: Delhi, India, p.160.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid., p.160-161.

²⁸² Mao, Zedong. (2003) “The Role of The Chinese Communist Party in the National War”. in *Selected Articles of Mao Tse-Tung*. New Vistas Publications: Delhi, India, p.161.

leadership because “it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together.”²⁸³

4.3 Core Concepts of Maoism for Socialist Education

4.3.1 Socialist Education

Before discussing Chinese educational equity, it is appropriate to grasp the essentials of the ideas of socialist education.²⁸⁴ Since Marx did not directly discuss education, we have to draw on inferences from his writings on political economy and social changes.²⁸⁵ Marx’s theory maintains that communism is not an end but a means to the greater humanity of human beings.²⁸⁶ Education should be for liberation—the abolition of alienation. Marx envisions a unity of theory and practice in the process of change—“the process of ‘becoming’, i.e., the lifelong process of developing all of our human potentials and power.”²⁸⁷ Marx’s discourse of praxis leads socialist education to impart and advance scientific knowledge and practical

²⁸³ Foucault, M. (1980) “Two lectures”. in C. Gordon (ed.) *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. Harvester Press: Sussex, U.K., p.93.

²⁸⁴ For the purpose of this thesis, socialist education and communist education are used interchangeably. This inter-changeability comes from Stanley Moore: “Nowhere does Marx clearly separate the transition to socialism to the transition to communism.”(See Moore, S. (1980) *Marx on the Choice Between Socialism and Communism*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, p.52.)

²⁸⁵ Allman, P. (2007) *On Marx: An Introduction to the Revolutionary Intellect of Karl Marx*. Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, Netherlands., p.51-67.

²⁸⁶ Madan, S. (1978) *Marxism and Education*. Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, England., p.109.

²⁸⁷ Allman, P. (2007) *On Marx: An Introduction to the Revolutionary Intellect of Karl Marx*. Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, Netherlands., p.51.

skills, the combination of which would enable the transformation of backward economies into modern industrial societies. It aims to provide an avenue of social mobility for the exploited and disadvantaged stratum of society by facilitating the establishment of egalitarian societies via the abolition of the division between mental and manual labour.²⁸⁸ This is to be achieved through the transformation of the values, attitudes and behaviour of the masses, building up the new citizens of a modern socialist state²⁸⁹ and at the same time establishing the “realm of necessity” as the premise for the abundant supply of material to all human beings.²⁹⁰

One of the core elements of the communist education system is anchored “in its combination of influences on seeing, believing, cherishing and willing”, with an attempt to train citizens who “share positively and constructively in the ‘dialectical process’”.²⁹¹ The discourse that prevails is one of “a new world for a new kind of man” and “building up a communist man in a communist world.”²⁹² This provides an ontological dimension of the discourse to generate a desire for Marxism. The role of the communist school is “to overcome a class division and become a ‘tool of

²⁸⁸ Ibid., p.53.

²⁸⁹ For details, see Castle, S. and Wustenberg, W. (1979) *The Education of the Future: An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Socialist Education*. Pluto Press: London, U.K.

²⁹⁰ Allman, P. (2007) *On Marx: An Introduction to the Revolutionary Intellect of Karl Marx*. Sense Publishers: Rotterdam, Netherlands., p.53.

²⁹¹ King, E. (1963) *Communist Education*. Methuen &.Co.: London, England., p.3.

²⁹² Ibid.

communist transformation of society”²⁹³.

4.3.2 Mao's Concept of Socialist Education

A discourse of localism in education for Mao is based on his unique revolutionary experience and particularly the experimental educational set ups of the Yan'an period²⁹⁴ (1935-47). The Maoist prime goal of education is to transform human consciousness which in turn will transform the world through action. The core emphasis is on mass education with a central belief: while human consciousness can be shaped by the material environment, humans are endowed with the ability to develop ideas and concepts which, when put into practice, are able to transform the world. It is a human-centred belief in which the driving force of transformation is human effort, the creative labour of the human species. Mao's experience of the education system persuaded him that the stagnant, traditional, Chinese examination-oriented education system for the elite and civil officialdom did not fit well with the actual need of the masses and did not facilitate the advancement of China in the midst of the urgent need to accommodate many more people within an

²⁹³ Zajda, J. I. (1980) *Education in the USSR*. Pergamon Press: Oxford, England., p.15.

²⁹⁴ Peter Seybolt provides a detailed summary of the subject. See Seybolt, P. (1971) "The Yanan Revolution in Mass Education". in *China Quarterly* Issue 48, pp.641-669..

expanded system.²⁹⁵ At the same time, the modern school facilities of the West did not fit in well with the reality in China. In Mao's time, the "foreign-ness" of modern primary schools was rejected by the peasants. They found foreign education inappropriate for the needs of village life.²⁹⁶ Mao's dialectical endeavour led to the establishment of an alternative form of education "that is nationalist, scientific and popular".²⁹⁷ This is in line with Mao's discussion in section XV "A National, Scientific and Mass Culture" in "On New Democracy" of January 1940.²⁹⁸ Mao was convinced of the need to prepare the way for other "truths", "truths" that were fit for China.

Power and knowledge are mutually productive. The CCP, as a "network of institutions and practices",²⁹⁹ produced knowledge of Marxist education in China which is "enmeshed and defined" by the localised Marxism.³⁰⁰ Indeed the CCP network is "very coherent and well adapted to its purpose when one looks at its

²⁹⁵ Seybolt, P. (1971) "The Yenian Revolution in Mass Education". *China Quarterly*. Issue 48, p.662.

²⁹⁶ Pepper, S. (1990) *China's Education Reform in the 1980s: Policies, Issues, and Historical Perspectives*. Institute of East Asia of the University of California: Berkeley, CA. ,p.15-16.

²⁹⁷ Article 41 of the Common Programme, adopted by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference after the Communist seizure of power in 1949.<<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1949-ccp-program.html>> (assessed on Jan 25, 2013).

²⁹⁸ Mao, Zedong. (1965) On New Democracy. In *Selected Works of Mao Zedong Vol. II*. Foreign Languages Press: Peking, PRC., pp.339-384.

²⁹⁹ Foucault, M. (2000) "Candidacy presentation: College de France, 1969". in P. Rabinow (ed.) *Ethics: Subjectivity and truth: The essential work of Foucault 1954-1984, Volume 1*. Penguin: Harmondsworth. , p.5.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

functioning and the justifications it was given at the time: a whole exact and articulated knowledge was involved in it.”³⁰¹ The formation of knowledge is based on social and political practices. These political and social practices shape discourses that construct subjects.

Mao encounters Lenin’s discourse on polytechnic education and the affirmation that “the school not only must be a leader of communist principles in general but also a guide of ideological, organizational and educational influence of the proletariat.....aiming at training a generation capable of establishing communism completely”.³⁰² He, however, struggles with his other political considerations, reaches a compromise and then produces a new perspective on the need for “red” and “expert” communist individuals for China.³⁰³ “Red” refers to the politically advanced who are loyal and competent in Marxism and “expert” refers to those who have technical knowledge for professional tasks. Leadership in the construction of socialist state requires a combination of “red” and “expert”. Simply put, a competent communist is one who is able to contribute to the country politically and

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² This was part of the policy statement on education, which was worked out by Lenin, agreed at the Seventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party of the Bolshevik; as quoted in Zajda, J.I. (1980) *Education in the USSR*. Pergamon Press: Oxford, England, p.11.

³⁰³ Mao, Zedong. (1986) “Being Red and Being Expert” in *Selected Readings of Mao Zedong Vol. II*. People’s Publisher: Beijing, PR., pp.803-805.[This is in Chinese: 「又紅又專」毛泽东著作选读 下册 (1986) 人民出版社, 北京, p.803-805.]

professionally. Dialectically, politics and professionalism form a unity of opposites in which politics is predominant and primary.³⁰⁴ This combination has apparent implications for educational policy. In the mind of Mao, education, instead of representing the landlords and of serving the interests of the ruling class as in feudal China, requires a transformation to serve the masses, the workers and peasants. This discourse enables the education system to function as a tool of communist societal transformation,³⁰⁵ within the Chinese context. Mao ensures that education and culture should serve politics by boosting the political awareness of the Chinese masses: “We must strengthen our ideological and political work. Both students and intellectuals should study hard.....they must make progress both ideologically and politically which means they should study Marxism [a globalising ideology], current events and politics [both global and local]. Not to have a correct political orientation [about the globe and the nation] is like not having a soul.”³⁰⁶ For Mao education is the basis for moulding future comrades and acts as a platform for propaganda.

Although Mao is not university-educated, he is a lifelong learner and a keen

³⁰⁴ Lofstedt, J. (1980) *Chinese Educational Policy: Changes and Constructions 1949-79*. Humanities Press: Atlantic Highlands, N.J., p.44.

³⁰⁵ As quoted in Zajda, J.I. (1980) *Education in the USSR*. Pergamon Press: Oxford, England, p.15.

³⁰⁶ Mao, Zedong. (2003) “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People”. in *Selected Articles of MaoTse-tung*. New Vistas Publishings: New Delhi, India.,p.72.

educator. Mao's basic educational philosophy has been quite consistent over the period of his reign. His priorities however do alter, fitting in with changing historical conditions. His report to the Central Executive Committee in 1934 reflects his idea about a globalised communist spirit of education (in its Soviet format) and the need to localise it in the Chinese way, for the purpose of serving the Chinese masses "to enjoy culture and happiness" and the core task is:

“.....to introduce compulsory education for all our people, to launch large scale socialist education, vigorously to eliminate illiteracy and to create a large number of high level cadres to lead revolutionary struggle.”³⁰⁷

After the establishment of the PRC in 1949, Mao continues to emphasise that the aim of education is for socialist construction. He however extends the scope from a narrow perspective of nationalism to a wider outlook of socialism: “our educational policy must enable everyone who receives an education to develop morally, intellectually, and physically and become a well-educated worker imbued with socialist consciousness”.³⁰⁸ Education continues to serve proletarian ideals and integrates with productive labour.

³⁰⁷ Mso, Zedong's "Report to the Executive Central Committee of the Chinese Soviet Republic" of 1934 as revealed in *Chinese Education*. 3. (April, 1970), p.35.

³⁰⁸ Mao, Zedong, (2003) "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People". in *Selected Articles of MaoTse-tung*. New Vistas Publishing: New Delhi, India.,p.72.

4.4 Mao's Compulsory Education: intellectualisation of labours, labourisation of intellectuals

Based on the discourse that education is a tool of class struggle, and is to serve class politics, Mao's educational policies were formulated mainly according to the local requirement of politicisation. Alongside the shifts of local political movements and power struggles, educational policies changed accordingly. In CCP terms, they changed along "political lines". In Mao's time, the "struggle between two lines" of the CCP's educational policy was focused on the tension between the "socialist educational line" of Mao Zedong and the "revisionist educational line" of Liu Shaoqi.³⁰⁹ Summing up, the tension and struggle may be considered from these perspectives:

1. from a political perspective, it is a question of revolution or modernisation,
2. from a task perspective, it is a question of nurturing political consciousness or acquisition of knowledge,
3. from an organisational perspective, it is a question of a half-work-half study system or a full-time study system, and
4. from an educational administration perspective, it is a question of putting an emphasis whether on "red" or "expert" by the leaders (as we have discussed

³⁰⁹ Liu Shaoqi was an important member of the CCP in Mao's time and was once considered as Mao's first heir-apparent. Liu however was later being labelled and accused, by the Maoist norm, as a "capitalist roader" and a "revisionist" who advocates and utilises capitalist practices.

earlier).

Education, as politics, is often a struggle between different views of how society should be organised, resources distributed, and authority exercised. From an ideological perspective, the struggle between the “socialist educational line” and the “revisionist educational line” is the theoretical difference on the question: Which is the correct route of transition from socialist society to communist society? Liu’s interpretation was that class struggle would basically end when socialist transformation of production relations was completed. When such a point was reached, the whole of society would have to make economic construction the first priority. With this, enhancement of the cultural, scientific and technological levels of the masses would become the prime requirement for the building of a communist material base. Hence, Liu advocated that the task of education is primarily on the teaching of knowledge and technology, led by experts and emphasising the modernised educational mode across the globe. School, which is the place to develop and nurture human resources, should focus on teaching while students should focus on learning and studying substantive and practical theories and techniques, avoiding political activities.

On the other hand, Mao's localised experience in the pre-1949 period, especially the Yan'an period, plays an important role in Mao's later development of educational ideas. In Kwong's wordings, these experiences "became the prototype of many such later experiments".³¹⁰ It was a period characterised by internal warfare with the Nationalist Party (the KMT) when the CCP had to be based in the poor area of Yan'an. Due to the lack of resources, education activities including curricula had to be minimised to the very basics and arranged outside the boundaries of traditional classrooms. Typical Western educational provision with well-equipped facilities was considered not suitable for the reality of impoverished China. Mao's conclusion was that "the education of New China must be based upon the educational experience of the old liberated areas" with an emphasis on nurturing labourers with socialist consciousness, characterising an era of politicisation.³¹¹ Mao is "critical of the old system of formal education".³¹² While he discredited book-learning, Mao linked it as belonging to the educational ancestry of the bourgeoisie and hence he opposed the modernisation of formal schooling and training.³¹³ As Lofstedt has pointed out,

³¹⁰ Kwong, J. (1979) *Chinese Education In Transition: Prelude to the Cultural Revolution*. McGill-Queen's University Press: Montreal, Canada., p.43.

³¹¹ This was Mao's view in the First National Conference on Educational Work convened in December 1949 as quoted in Wang, H. (1975) *Chinese Communist Education: The Yen'an Period*. Institute of International Relations: Taipei, Republic of China., p.24.

³¹² Lofstedt, J. (1980) *Chinese Educational Policy: Changes and Contradictions 1949-79*. Humanities Press: Atlantic Highlands, N.J., p.45.

³¹³ *Ibid*, p.45-47.

Mao had an ambiguous view on intellectuals.³¹⁴ Despite material abundance being a key promise of communism, economism was repudiated since material benefits were considered to be agents in undermining the revolutionary zeal of the masses and creating a temptation to drive them away from Mao's discourse. To carry out his discourse on "education is to serve proletarian politics",³¹⁵ Mao advocated that practice is more important than theory. For Mao, compulsory education is the process of intellectualising the labourers and peasants who "must be educated to become a new force of proletarian intelligentsia".³¹⁶ At the same time, it is proletarianising the intellectuals because "[i]ntellectuals must be reformed by labor and learn to identify themselves with the laboring class".³¹⁷ This is to be achieved through a combination of school activities and "practical activities of the society".³¹⁸ Educational activities, in Mao's sense of compulsory education, became a combination of labour and study activities but with an ultra-political focus.

The CCP considers itself as both an organiser and as an educator with the responsibility to develop progression programmes in science, culture and technology

³¹⁴ Ibid, p.45.

³¹⁵ Lofstedt, J. (1980) *Chinese Educational Policy: Changes and Contradictions 1949-79*. Humanities Press: Atlantic Highlands, N.J., p.47.

³¹⁶ Chen, T. (1974) *The Maoist Educational Revolution*. Praeger Publishers: New York, N.Y., p.35.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Lofstedt, J. (1980) *Chinese Educational Policy: Changes and Contradictions 1949-79*. Humanities Press: Atlantic Highlands, N.J., p.45-47.

so that the nation is able to advance in the world.³¹⁹ Citizens under Communist China, according to the Constitution, are entitled to equal opportunity to receive education.³²⁰ Despite the concept of “people” occupying a prime role in Chinese Marxism in the Mao era,³²¹ it does not direct “people” to educational equity, at least not schooling equity. Mao’s idea of educational equity, as practised by the CCP leadership, is not about having equal opportunity of schooling but in everyone being trained to becoming proletarian, as the dominant discourse in education. This is not surprising since socialist education is considered as a sub-system of the overall political infrastructure. In the Mao era, “[e]ducation is a part of politics and must serve proletariat politics.”³²² The Maoist idea of education is about far more than schooling. Education is not limited to, and in fact has little to do with, classroom training. For the Maoist government, education has a much wider scope than that defined in other countries: the whole country is the field of education, and virtually all socio-political and economic organisations are charged with the responsibility of education. Education is grounded in the combination of all social processes and

³¹⁹ Price, R.F. (1970) *Education in Communist China*. Routledge & Kegan Paul: London, U.K., p.236.

³²⁰ Article 94 of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China, September 1954. Source: *Documents of First Session of the First National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China*. Foreign (1955) Languages Press: Peking, PRC., pp.160-161. See also Fraser, S. (ed.) (1965) *Chinese Communist Education Records of the First Decade*. John Wiley & Sons: New York, N.Y..

³²¹ The importance of “people” is reflected in i) the nation is named the People’s Republic of China, ii) the government is called the People’s Government and iii) the new currency is termed People’s Currency (Reminbei).

³²² Zhou, J. (2000) *Remaking China’s Public Philosophy for the Twenty-first Century*, Ph.D. Dissertation. Baylor University: Waco, Texas., p.215.

undertakings with politics; it has become a political socialisation function.³²³

The emphasis is consistently on “red” and “expert”. This is grounded in Mao’s dialectical unity of theory and practice. When “ideological training is the key to education”,³²⁴ learning intellectual, cultural, scientific and technological knowledge in Mao’s era is not at the top of a list of priorities; in fact it becomes peripheral. For Mao, education is virtually about elevating “the people’s Communist consciousness, morality, and to completely eliminate the political and ideological influence of the bourgeoisie.”³²⁵ It is an era occupied by a revolution-centred model of education. This is articulated particularly in the Cultural Revolution, during which the school curriculum performs a critical function in socialising the younger generation. As Lin highlights, they are socialised “to be uncritical beings with a biased view on human history and on the values and worth of different social groups”.³²⁶ In fact, political education, particularly of Marxist philosophy, the history of the CCP and of the international communist movements, becomes compulsory. Challenges to the correctness of the content are virtually not tolerated because the communist

³²³ See the article “The Great Revolution and Development in Our Country’s Educational Tasks” as quoted in Hu, C.T. (1962) *Chinese Education under Communism*. Bureau of Publications, Teachers Colleges, Columbia University: New York, N.Y., p.37.

³²⁴ Zhou, J. (2000) *Remaking China’s Public Philosophy for the Twenty-first Century*. Ph.D. Dissertation. Baylor University: Waco, Texas., p.226.

³²⁵ As quoted in Priestley, K. (1961) *Education in China*. Dragonfly Books: Hong Kong., p.10.

³²⁶ Lin, L. (1994) *The Opening of the Chinese Minds: Democratic Changes in China*. Praeger: Westport, C.T. , p.103.

discourse(s) are doctrinal.³²⁷ Class struggle occupies a significant role and acts as one of the big levers to drive his ideological paradigm in which knowledge is postulated to come from practice.

Mao's idea on equity is quite unique, at least philosophically. As Whitehead has highlighted, the liberal value of equity, together with those of liberty and fraternity, and associated values of humanism, are viewed by "the Maoist as supporting an exploitative system because they confuse the problem of class struggle".³²⁸ For Mao, "proletarianisation" of the masses is of prime importance and ultimately will reflect equity; at least the Maoist "truth" of equity, not the "liberal" value of equity. Mao's strategy is to collectively manage the educational process for the masses of workers, peasants, army, students, teachers and parents so that it becomes possible to foster a new generation of Chinese proletarian intelligentsia who are both "red" and "expert". From this perspective, Mao allows equal opportunity of education, in the broadest sense, for everyone, not merely the students. Although there were "demands in the allotment of billets" and "in the assignment of fatigue duties in the midst of signs of inequality", Mao's response is by treating the demand for "[a]bsolute equalitarianism"

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Whitehead, R. (1977) *Love and Struggle in Mao's Thought*. Orbis Books: Maryknoll, New York., p.128.

as “the product of a handicraft and small peasant economy”.³²⁹ He does not pay high regard to the peasants. “Before the abolition of capitalism, absolute equalitarianism is a mere illusion of peasants and small proprietors”,³³⁰ Mao explicitly expresses. He holds that “even under socialism there can be no absolute equality”.³³¹ Distribution of resources is to be based on the principle of “from each according to his ability, to each according to his work”,³³² not “each according to his needs” which is the ideal promise of communism. Since struggle is at the core of Mao’s thought, he concludes the subject by saying that “absolute equalitarianism beyond reason must be opposed because it is not required by struggle; on the contrary, it hinders struggle.”³³³ The one who defines the reason—the rationality, of course, is Mao. Struggle overrides equity. Equity, although maintained to be one of the final goals of Communism, carries little weight in the overall strategy of Mao’s blue print for structuring socialism in China. Compulsory education is not to be realised by the action of organising students to attend schools but by engaging them in the opportunity of working and production as well as the learning of the ideology of a globalised Marxism and a localised Maoism. Equity of educational attainment is reflected in

³²⁹ Mao, Zedong. (1965) “On Absolute Equalitarianism”. in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung. Vol.I.* Foreign Language Press: Peking, China., p.111.

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Ibid.

everyone being provided with the opportunity to become proletarian.

Meanwhile, it is important to bear in mind that the Maoist approach has created “an atmosphere unfavourable to quality education and high standards of scholarships”. There exists a notion that “study is useless” with “a prevalent cynicism in regard to the value of education”.³³⁴ Paradoxically, this is contradictory to the slogan of “red” and “expert”. The Chinese communist revolution under the Maoist ideological paradigm aims at not merely restructuring the political system of China but also revitalising the whole country with new type of citizens. Education, quality education and high standards of scholarship should be the best means to nurture new types of citizens. However, anti-intellectualism in Mao’s time has associated quality education and high standards of scholarship with bourgeois culture, the enemy of the proletariat. Maoist localisation of Marxism in China has gone too far in minimising the function of education by shortening the period of schooling, lowering the standard of scholarship and eliminating essential academic courses. One has to ask: How long is a country able to afford shutting her eyes to immediate and longer-term needs? How possible is the existence of competent “experts”? What is the training for future leaders who are able to grasp the critical problems of the

³³⁴ Chen, T. (1974) *The Maoist Educational Revolution*. Praeger: New York, N.Y., p. 201.

nation and offer strategic solutions, both locally and globally? Revolution-led proletarianism, anti-intellectualism and the discourse of class struggle have dominated in the Maoist “discursive formation” to prevent viable answers to these questions.

This finding about the ideological domination of the discourse of proletarianism in the educational field may perhaps be supported by Chen’s earlier argument that the Cold War is a time in which strong ideological language is used in China (as well as in other parts of the globe) to justify various policies (Chen’s study focuses on the field of foreign policy and security).³³⁵ Chen highlights that many of China’s policies are under the “truth” of “proletarian internationalism” which China, with her role in the global communist movement, is charged to fulfil. In a deeper sense, Chen maintains, the experience of China in the Cold War is ideologically reflected in the discourse of “continuous revolution” advocated by Mao, which becomes the core theme in shaping various strategies and policies. Arguably, Mao’s revolution aims not at seizure of power for the CCP as an ultimate objective but to transform the whole of China and concurrently reaffirm the central position of China in the globe, if we take into consideration the official name, and hence the core objective, of

³³⁵ Chen, J. (2001) *Mao’s China and the Cold War*. University of North Carolina: Chapel Hill, N.C..

China—the Central Kingdom. The global and local objectives of revolution indeed are dialectically connected. On the one hand, it is specifically by virtue of the CCP's local mission that the global revolution is justified; on the other hand, global revolution backs up local initiatives, supporting the legitimacy of local revolution and powering its momentum.

4.5 Conclusion:

Equity-laden Marxism has generated new discursive practices in the PRC under new political priorities and ideological transformation. From an educational equity perspective using Levin's evaluation framework, Mao's fostering of a new generation of Chinese proletarian "red and expert" intelligentsia allows equal educational access, in the broadest sense, to all people, not merely students, to becoming proletariat. Paradoxically, this becomes a source of inequity of educational access especially during the Cultural Revolution since children of those families which are identified by the CCP as "not-for-revolution" or "anti-revolutionary" are deprived of further schooling opportunities. Maoism is characterised by its revolutionary nature centred on class struggle. The discourse of "learning how to struggle" preoccupies normal school activities. In the school system, those who "struggle" more are privileged and

those who “struggle” less are discriminated against. There is hindering of equity of educational participation, as reflected in the lack of academic content and the deteriorating conditions of teaching. Educational attainment inequity is again reflected by political loyalty, the pre-determined standard of political stance, not merely of the student but of the family members. This extends into the inequity effect on life chances because of the reinforcing effect of the political status of family members on the ultimate possibilities for the future achievement of the student.

Mao’s strategy for exploring the possibility of Marxism in China is to contextualise its emphasis on the dialectic of globalism and localism for “truth”. The task is to re-configure euro-centric Marxism to become a kind of subjective truth for China. Specific effects of power, as mandated by the rules of Mao, devise different discourse-searching paths that open up diverse kinds of “truth”. They however focus on a key political aim—legitimacy. The process transfigures the CCP and endows the party with new knowledge, but the final aim of such new knowledge is not only the advancement of the leader but of the entire political body—the CCP.

Mao’s ideological dialectics functions to unveil and interact with the

contradictions of his time by means of a process of “dialogical challenge-and-response”.³³⁶ It is a challenge from the globalised Marxism-Leninism from abroad and a response from the local Chinese. As a means of inquiry into the suitability and applicability of Marxism-Leninism to China, dialectics directs a continuous intervention between various political discourses and the complex state of affairs that constitutes the reality of China. Maoism, like other ideologies, is a combination of political discourses organised in a particular order. These political discourses include revolutionism, proletarianism, class struggle, democracy, rights, equity, justice and power and they interact, overlap and reinforce each other.³³⁷ The Chinese Communist has been confronted with a selection of the relevant discourses within Marxism-Leninism at different stages of history for the construction of a “localised” Chinese Marxism, which is credited as an innovative theorisation in the advancement of Marxism, a universally valid revolutionary theory. Mao initiates his historical reconfiguration of knowledge. This re-organisation of knowledge constitutes new forms of power and domination, both of which are in a dynamic relationship.

³³⁶ Rescher, N. (2007) *Dialectics: A Classical Approach to Inquiry*. OntosVerlag: Heusenstamm, Germany. ,p.166.

³³⁷ Freedon, M. (1996) *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, U.K., p.67.

From this study, we have come to understand the epistemic context within which the knowledge, the “truth” of Marxism becomes intelligible and authoritative. Mao has structured the concepts and statements intelligibly together, the statements are organised thematically and some of these statements become “serious acts”, that is, they are prioritised³³⁸. Marxism’s gradual transformation in China in the Mao era breaks not with the “true” propositions which it had originally been possible to formulate but, more profoundly, with ways of expressing and articulating, the whole ensemble of practices which serves as supports for political knowledge. As part of the outcome of an “ideological state apparatus”, the CCP’s new discovery, new “regime” in discourses does not stop but continues into the Deng Xiaoping era which we shall study in the next chapter.

³³⁸ Herbert Drefus and Paul Rabinow offer an useful discussion, in their book *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, of what it means for a statement to be a “serious act” in Foucault’s earlier work.

Chapter Five

The Discourses of Modernism and Economism

5.1 Communist Ideology Continuous to Guide

Discourse is “both an instrument and an effect of power”; it is “also a stumbling point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy”.³³⁹ Discourses and institutions synergise with each other and are re-defined from time to time through the flux of political ideologies as well as through societal channels such as the education system and the media. The “battle for truth”, from this perspective, is about an assessment, an evaluation of which one stands out as the most critical. It is also about the conflict around “the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays”.³⁴⁰ The prevalent pragmatism leading to economic reforms of the PRC since Mao, has led some scholars, Gorden White and Wei-wei Zhang included,³⁴¹ to believe that communist ideology has become irrelevant in the post-Mao era. It seems to them that globalised market reform has resulted in de-ideologisation. These scholars ignore the continuous existence of a power/knowledge nexus. They also assume that a loss of truthfulness of the discourse of Marxism has led the CCP to

³³⁹ Foucault, M. (1998) *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge*. Penguin: London, U.K., p.100-101

³⁴⁰ Foucault, M. (1991) *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's thought*. (ed.) Paul Rabinow, Penguin: London, U.K., p.73.

³⁴¹ See White, G. “The Decline of Ideocracy” in Benewick, R. and Wingrove, P. (eds.) (1995) *China in the 1990s*. Macmillan: London, England., pp.23-24. And Zhang, W. (1996) *Ideology and Economic Reform under Deng Xiaoping 1978-1993*. Kegan Paul International: London, England., p.7.

forsake communism and focus on non-ideological resources for pragmatic solutions to the social, economic and political dilemmas which the CCP has to tackle. However, a dialectical approach enables this study to see it from the other side - that the CCP regime still holds on to the core beliefs of communism for legitimacy. A weakening of communist ideology at the general public level may be observed but the CCP, as the “ideological state apparatus” which manages ideological relations, holds strongly that Marxism and the localised form of Chinese Marxism continue to function as the “truth”—“truth” that will lead the country to progress through the primary stage of socialism eventually to the stage of communism, fulfilling its historical destiny. However tenuous the emerging discourse is to the communist legacy of Maoism, the leadership of the CCP is embedded in a process whereby to legitimate and inform policy they need to draw on this political heritage even when they may be critical of it. The CCP leadership is a prisoner of words and discourses as well as a resource for introducing new ones, which as we shall see, ends up producing another form of rural educational (in)equity.

Following this introduction, which identifies the continuity of Chinese communist ideological guidance, the chapter continues to establish the existence of

rural educational inequity in the Deng Xiaoping era.³⁴² Analysis of the change to Deng's ideological endeavours then frames the context which leads to the impact on rural educational inequity.

5.2 Rural Educational Inequity in Deng's Era

Different policy contexts offer different material possibilities. After the revolution-led educational policies in the decade of the Cultural Revolution, the rigidity of the centralised administration of education continued with a much deteriorated quality of education at all levels of schooling; and inadequate vocational and technical training. Policy-makers attempted to carry out reforms around these deficiencies.³⁴³ The relatively simple system, based on political recommendations, in the previous decade started to be transformed into a multiplex hierarchy of school programmes of varying lengths and curricula. Financial support to these programmes began to be differentiated. The examination-based progression system was reinstalled. The focus in the field of education was placed on capturing the ability to master the latest scientific and technological developments, emphasising individual talents and

³⁴² Deng was one of the core members of the inner circle of CCP from the 1950s to the middle of 1960s. He however was demoted and sent to six years of internal exile to remote areas during the Cultural Revolution. Towards the final stage of the Cultural Revolution in the middle 1970s, Deng was raised up again only to descend quickly once again just before the death of Mao Zedong. By 1977, Deng regained leadership from his last political rehabilitation and continued in political power until the middle of the 1990s.

³⁴³ See Pepper, S. (1990) *China's Education Reform in the 1980s: Policies, Issues, and Historical Perspectives*. Institute of East Asian Studies: Berkeley, LA.

competition for enhanced quality.³⁴⁴ Technical schools saw a rapid increase in enrolment while academic secondary schools experienced a decline in enrolment in the early 1980s.³⁴⁵ With an injection of funding from the government, key-point schools, which were privileged to receive extra funding to enrol students of a higher calibre and of special status, multiplied. Lewin et al have pointed out that, by 1981, there was a total of 4,016 key-point secondary schools in the PRC (primarily in the urban areas), far more than the 196 in 1953 and the 487 in 1963 before the Cultural Revolution.³⁴⁶ A national funding priority was formed to reward those schools which were able to turn out students of a high calibre who were capable of progressing on to university education.³⁴⁷ Viewed from another perspective, the rural schools were deprived of sufficient resources for their improvement.³⁴⁸

While urban dwellers received preferential treatment, administrative responsibility and the financial burden of basic education were decentralised to

³⁴⁴ Kwong, J. (1985) "Changing Political Culture and Changing Curriculum: An Analysis of Language Textbooks in the People's Republic of China." in *Comparative Education*. Vol.21. pp.197-208. And Lin, J. (1993) *Education in Post-Mao China*. Praeger: Westport, Conn., Chap.1.

³⁴⁵ Pepper, S. (1990) *China's Education Reform in the 1980s: Policies, Issues, and Historical Perspectives*. Institute of East Asian Studies: Berkeley, LA., pp.97-98.

³⁴⁶ Lewin, K., Little, A., Xu, H., and Zheng, J. (1994) *Educational Innovation in China: Tracing the Impact of the 1985 Reforms*. Longman: Essex, England., p.87.

³⁴⁷ Lo, B. "Primary Education: A Two Track System for Dual Tasks". in Hayhoe, R. (ed.) (1984) *Contemporary Chinese Education*. Croom Helm: Sydney, Australia. pp.47-64.

³⁴⁸ On a national policy basis, China has formulated a strategy of dualistic development. Much more resources are allocated to urban areas while the rural areas are expected to support for itself. See Saich, T. (2011) *Governance and Politics of China* (3rd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire, U.K., p.316.

township and county levels.³⁴⁹ This was in line with the decision of the CCP, in launching the “Reform and Open Policy”,³⁵⁰ to motivate the productivity of peasants under socialism by “taking attentive care to their material benefits and, politically, solidly protecting their democratic rights”.³⁵¹ Initially, the increased burden of additional costs for basic education was matched with an incremental increase in the income of rural households, as a result of economic growth from farming and village industrialisation. To reduce the rural-urban disparities, a national educational policy was created to establish 9-year compulsory education, linked with targeted economic and industrial development. However, the cities received preferential treatment. A target was set to fully implement a 9-year compulsory education (primary and junior secondary schooling) by 1990 for cities and special economic zones of the coastal provinces and selected interior areas, which accounted for about one quarter of the population. For areas of under development, which amounted to about half of the population, the target was set for 1995. No target date was mentioned for the remaining quarter of the population, in remote and underdeveloped areas, for full

³⁴⁹ Lewin, K., Little, A., Xu, H., and Zheng, J. (1994) *Educational Innovation in China: Tracing the Impact of the 1985 Reforms*. Essex: Longman. p.22-24; Davis, D. (1989) “Chinese Social Welfare: Policies and Outcomes”. in *China Quarterly*. Vol.119. pp.577-597.

³⁵⁰ Lan, W., Zhu, Y. and Lan, J. (1996) “Educational Reform in China Since 1978”. in J. Hu, Z. Hong and E. Stavrou (eds.) *In Search of A Chinese Road Toward Modernization: Economic and Educational Issues in China's Reform Process*. The Edwin Meller: Lampeter, Wales., p.225.

³⁵¹ At the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of December, 1978. This is in Chinese: 中國共產黨十一屆中央委員會第三次全體會議公報 --- 十一屆三中全會以來的歷次全國代表大會中央全會重要文件選編. 北京: 中央文獻出版社 pp.24-25.

implementation of the programme. The deficient quality of rural schooling reflected an increasing urban-rural inequity. Barriers were set up through the academic route to attainment of status. Since primary schooling was locally financed and geographical mobility was tightly controlled, promising rural students were largely hindered from progressing into urban schools.³⁵² Elitism³⁵³ in a corruption-nurturing sphere gradually gained momentum in accelerating educational inequity.³⁵⁴ With this understanding, we shall then proceed to analyse the ideological discourses and their interpretations that are linked to increased rural educational inequity.

5.3 Deng Xiaoping's Ideological Dialectics of Globalism and Localism

Following on from Mao, Deng Xiaoping in the mid-1970s inherited a stagnant economy, a confused society and paralysed polity after the Cultural Revolution. Drawing from Foucault, Deng's powerful voice within the overall CCP discourse

³⁵² Niu, X. (1992) *Policy Education and Inequalities in Communist China since 1949*. University Press of America: Lanham, Maryland., p.91.

³⁵³ One of the models of the development of elitism is linked to the discourse of "winner-takes-all". See Bo, Z (2007) *China's Elite Politics: Political Transition and Power Balancing*. World Scientific Publishing: Singapore.

³⁵⁴ In a discussion on "corruption as policy consequence", Gong highlights new varieties of corruption have been generated in China since the reform in 1978. One of the paradoxical phenomena Gong has observed is that while the CCP had no intention of loosening its control over society, its increased allowance for the out-of-the-official system autonomy nevertheless allowed opportunities for abuses at the out-of-the official system level. See Gong, T. (1994) *The Politics of Corruption in Contemporary China: An Analysis of Policy Outcomes*. Praeger: Westport, CT., pp. 111-134. Sun also highlights linkage between reform and corruption. See Sun, Y. (2004) *Corruption and Market in Contemporary China*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca, N.Y.

represents a “nodal” point in the capillaries of power, which leads towards the discursive formation of modernism and economism. Problems began to be seen and analysed from a new perspective and head-on actions formulated sharply. A fresh strategy of ruling, a new interpretation of the dialectics of globalism and localism and the subsequent impact on educational (in)equity emerged beginning with Deng’s idea of the role of the CCP. As Gale informs this study, ideological discursive strategies are formulated by dominant policy actor(s).³⁵⁵ For Deng, the Party had to sustain the responsibility of guiding the regime so that the Party’s ideology was realised and practised throughout the regime. There were however “rules” of the discourse which provide “the preconditions for formulating knowledge”.³⁵⁶ Innovation in “ways of thinking”³⁵⁷ was encouraged provided this did not work against the local Chinese communist political principles. Arguably, boundaries that enabled and restrained possibilities for action were set.³⁵⁸ There was no overlooking of the domestic context which always exerted significant counterforce against the pressure from the wider world. What was evident at that point in time was that the policy of opening up to the world would create pressures that “were likely to

³⁵⁵ Gale, T. (1999) “Policy Trajectories: Treading the discourse path of policy analysis”. in *Discourse Studies in Cultural Politics of Education*. Vol. 20 Issue 3, Dec 1999., p.401.

³⁵⁶ Crowther, J. (2000) “Participation in adult and community education: a discourse of diminishing returns”. in *International Journal of Lifelong Education*. Vol.19, No.6, pp.479-492.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., p.481.

³⁵⁸ This is based on Hayward’s view that power is considered as boundaries that enable and limit possibilities for action. See Hayward, C.R. (1998) “De-Facing Power”, in *Polity*, 31 (1).

reconfigure the state.”³⁵⁹ For the CCP, the opening of China to the world was a risky business because there was basically no precedence as a reference point. It was like crossing a fast-running river without prior knowledge of its depth and contour. The lack of legitimised knowledge is dangerous. The only safety measure is to slowly advance by feeling the stones step by step in the process. Hence, the famous discourse of “cross the river by touching the stones” reflected the associated uncertainty about the exact course, pace and implications of the potential transformation across China’s national contexts,³⁶⁰ bearing in mind the vast geography of China and the traditional central/local tensions.

The main discourse in the Deng era does have its historical foundations. In the early stage of “localisation” of Marxism in China, before the establishment of the PRC in 1949, the CCP had already emphasised development of production as being the basis for economic development, revealing the dedication to economism and modernism. Although there were sanctions imposed by the Japanese during the Anti-Japanese war, the CCP was able to establish a base for a self-sufficient economy.

³⁵⁹ Cortell, A. (2006) *Mediating Globalisation*. State University of New York Press: Albany, N.Y., p.15.

³⁶⁰ From the famous speech of Deng Xiaoping in December, 1978 before the CCP Plenary. See Sweetman, A. and Zhang, J. (2009) “Crossing the River by Touching the Stones: An Introduction to China’s Remarkable Thirty Years of Reform and Opening Up”. in Sweetman, A. and Zhang, J. (eds.) (2009) *Economic Transitions with Chinese Characteristics: Thirty Years of Reform and Opening Up*. McGill-Queen’s University Press: Montreal and Kingston: Canada.

The CCP had affirmed that the development of agriculture and rural industry could be a way of boosting production, instead of the pre-requisite Marxist discourse of industrial development. These ideas re-appeared again in the era of reform starting from the late 1970s, however, in a different context.

At this turning point, there was a need “to take careful stock politically”.³⁶¹ The overall political situation was determined by a strong “localised” development model, led by the radical line of the Cultural Revolution. The introductory section of the 1975 constitution (passed on 17th Jan, 1975) provides a good summation of the situation and the overall ideological discourse of the time:

“Socialist society is a rather long historical stage. In this historical stage, it is inevitable for class, class contradiction and class struggle to exist together with the existence of the struggle of socialism and capitalism. There is also the existence of the danger of the revival of capitalism and the threat of invasion and subversion by imperialism and socialist imperialism. These contradictions can only be resolved by the theory and practice of the revolution under the leadership of proletariat dictatorship. We must insist on the route and policy of the Chinese Communist Party within the whole Socialist historical stage, insist on the continual revolution under proletariat dictatorship so that our great country will progress forever along Marxism, Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought.”³⁶²

³⁶¹ Evans, R. (1997) *Deng Xiaoping and The Making of Modern China*. Penguin Books: London, England., p.223.

³⁶² This is a translation, by the writer of this thesis, of the introduction section of the 1975 Constitution of the People’s Republic of China.

The fervour of the Cultural Revolution can be seen in many parts of the Constitution since the chairmanship of the committee was under the leadership of Mao Zedong.³⁶³ Here, we may extend Ball's concept of policy discourse to constitutional discourse which "articulates and constrains the possibilities and probabilities of interpretation and enactment".³⁶⁴ The prevalent revolutionism was dominated by the ideas and wordings of continual revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the collective system of the labouring masses and the superstructure of overall dictatorship. Revolutionism, as a dominant discourse, however, is temporary and subject to change.³⁶⁵

Aiming at a continual strengthening of the Chinese nation-state through the forces of globalisation, the CCP started a tactful manoeuvre of the shifting of ideological dialectics from Mao's "localised" paradigm to a more "globalised" paradigm. Mao's dialectics for a strong "localised" socialist state based on the Chinese revolution-oriented experience was slowly shifted to one that advocated a strong "globalised" socialist state based on modernised agriculture, industry, national

³⁶³ Cai, Dingjian (2006) *Constitution: A Intensive Reading*. Law Press China: Beijing, PRC., pp.54-61.(in Chinese)

³⁶⁴ Ball, S. (1994) "What is policy? Texts, trajectories and toolboxes". in *Education Reform: A Critical and Post-structural Approach*. Open University Press: Buckingham, England., p.23.

³⁶⁵ Gale, T. (1999) "Policy Trajectories: Treading the discourse path of policy analysis". in *Discourse Studies in Cultural Politics of Education*. Vol. 20 Issue 3, Dec 1999,

defence and technology. The outcome of this dialectics can be summed up in two sentences: “[The PRC] must integrate the universal truth of Marxism with the concrete realities of China, blaze a path of [China’s] own and build socialism with Chinese characteristics—this is the basic conclusion [the PRC has] reached after summing up long historical experiences.”³⁶⁶ Arguably, this is an attempt to construct a knowledge that says: historical experience in the progress of Marxism as a global ideology has led China to prefer a globalisation process that links to an associated localisation with distinctive Chinese characteristics. It is not going to be a one-way street but have dual dynamics. On the one hand, it is about the acceptability of existing international norms, rules, ideas, regulations and obligations by the Chinese. This includes international economic and financial regulations. On the other hand, it is about the ability to spread Chinese influences on the transformation and establishment of a new global order, in which China is able to act in a constructive and influential manner due to her strengthening power.³⁶⁷

It is also an attempt to explore “the possibility of a discourse that would be both

³⁶⁶ Deng, Xiaoping, (1983) “Opening Speech At The Twelfth National Congress Of The CPC” dated September 1, 1982 in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1975-1982)*. Foreign Language Press: Beijing, China, p.395.

³⁶⁷ Guo, B. and Guo, S. (2010) *Greater China in An Era of Globalization*. Lexington Books: Lanham, Maryland., p.6.

true and strategically effective, the possibility of an historical truth which could have political effect”.³⁶⁸ This new initiative of ideological dialectics is tactfully packaged in a way conceived as building on Mao Zedong thought. The ideology of Mao is acknowledged to maintain socialist goals and values, in discursive terms, which can provide meaningful guidance for social and political actions. To maintain ideological consistency, which constitutes one of the important elements of legitimacy, “Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought constitute the guiding ideology” was affirmed.³⁶⁹ At the same time, the importance of a holistic approach to understanding Mao Zedong thought was emphasised.³⁷⁰

It was also reiterated that the theoretical foundation of the CCP and the ideology of Mao are built on Marxism which holds that “man’s social practice alone is the criterion of the truth of his knowledge of the external world”.³⁷¹ Here the social practice refers to the Chinese social practice and the external world is obviously the “globe”. The key point is to integrate theory with practice, pinpointing objective facts,

³⁶⁸ Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. Pantheon: New York, N.Y., p.64.

³⁶⁹ Deng, Xiaoping, (1983) “Mao Zedong Thought Must be Correctly Understood As An Integral Whole” dated July 21, 1977 in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1975-1982)*. Foreign Language Press: Beijing, China, p.55.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Mao, Zedong, (1961) “On Practice: On the Relation Between Knowledge and Practice, Between Knowing and Doing”. in *Selected Works of Mao Zedong. Vol.1*. Foreign Language Press: Beijing, China, p.296.

seeking truth from facts by analysing and studying actual conditions and solving practical problems.³⁷² The principle of dialectical unity of theory and practice applies here.

From a dialectical perspective, we are directed to see that the quintessence of the new discourse is a dialectical integration of the “globalised” general principles of Marxism (pure ideology) with the “localised” Chinese revolutionary practical reality (practical ideology). This is an endeavour of “seeking truth from facts”. It is an attempt to construct an integrated standard of “Mao Zedong Thought”, the content of which is the outcome of a new interpretation. In other words, realising the political context has changed extensively from Mao’s time, the CCP, under the leadership of Deng, is prepared, through ideological dialectical endeavour, to elevate Mao’s ideology from the level of practical ideology to pure ideology.

It is similar to that of Mao’s ideological dialectics, which transformed Lenin’s ideology from “practical” to “pure”. Here, “pure” ideology functions to shape ideas and thoughts while “practical” ideology aims to put thought into actions. Without

³⁷² Deng, Xiaoping, (1983) “Speech At The All-Army Conference On Political Work” dated June 2, 1978 in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1975-1982)*. Foreign Language Press: Beijing, China, p.128.

“pure” ideology, practical ideology is not legitimated; without practical ideology, pure ideology is unable to be turned into actions. The two are mutually reinforcing and linked.

In the process of transforming Mao Zedong Thought to form the basis of a new “truth”, Mao’s “localised” socialist model was shifted to one which employed the concept of “globalised” political-economic interaction, one that encouraged cultural and economic interchange with enhanced relationships with other countries, one that absorbed advanced global technology, management experience and capital. In legitimising the new discourse, Mao was credited with the statement, “.....proceeding from present realities and making full use of all favourable conditions to attain the objective of the four modernizations as defined by Comrade Mao Zedong.....”.³⁷³ The key point is that new discursive practices were merely a follow-up to Mao’s vision. It was a tactical manoeuvre that rested on the foundation that “conditions did not exist during Comrade Mao Zedong’s lifetime”,³⁷⁴ emphasising that Mao’s ideology could only represent cognition of truth at a certain time and in a certain space. The discourse on “globalisation” was made possible by

³⁷³ Deng, Xiaoping, (1983) “Hold High The Banner Of Mao Zedong Thought And Adhere To The Principle Of Seeking Truth From Facts” dated September 16, 1978 In *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1975-1982)*. Foreign Language Press: Beijing, China, p.143.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., p.142-143.

the transformation of the prevalent global conditions of the time. In Mao's time, "the necessary conditions were not present, because at the time an embargo was being imposed on China."³⁷⁵ It was a time when China was sealed off from the outside world.³⁷⁶ A platform was set up for action plans while not violating the political rules of the time. Another set of "rules" of the discourse started to emerge.³⁷⁷

The new ideological dialectics is not without purpose. It is for the "superiority of the socialist system"³⁷⁸ in China and throughout the globe with a means of "mobilising mass enthusiasm for the Four Modernisations"³⁷⁹ which articulates the modernisations of industry, of agriculture, of science/technology and of defence to advance the country. By making use of favourable conditions, communist China is able to capitalise on the accelerated growth of productive forces so that the masses are able to enjoy material wealth and cultural life with a "global" outlook³⁸⁰ and "to turn China into a great modern and powerful socialist country".³⁸¹

³⁷⁵ Ibid., p.142.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Crowther, J. (2000) "Participation in adult and community education: a discourse of diminishing returns". in *International Journal of Lifelong Education*. Vol.19, No.6, pp.479-492.

³⁷⁸ Deng, Xiaoping, (1983) "Hold High The Banner Of Mao Zedong Thought And Adhere To The Principle Of Seeking Truth From Facts" dated September 16, 1978 in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1975-1982)*. Foreign Language Press: Beijing, China, p.143.

³⁷⁹ Ding, S. (1987) *The Party-state Relationship in China, 1978-1986*. Ph.D. Dissertation: University of Norte Dame, U.S.A., p.117.

³⁸⁰ Deng, Xiaoping, (1983) "Hold High The Banner Of Mao Zedong Thought And Adhere To The Principle Of Seeking Truth From Facts" dated September 16, 1978 in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1975-1982)*. Foreign Language Press: Beijing, China, p.143.

³⁸¹ Deng, Xiaoping, (1983) "The Working Class Should Make Outstanding Contributions To The Four

Legitimacy and practicality remain prime considerations. Selectively, the contemporary discourse continuously holds a Marxist worldview that Marx's communism is going to overtake capitalism and that Lenin's socialism will replace imperialism. The process of globalisation is able to enhance the international situation for the facilitation of China's development through co-operation with other countries. This new discursive view of globalism includes the combination of the dynamics and interactive forces of learning from more advanced countries, sending out learning teams to understand the world and seeking advice and assistance internationally, the importation of advanced technology and equipment for the implementation of the four modernisations, developing productive forces and raising the living standards of the people.³⁸² The "globalised" open policy however is not without its limitations. Dialectically, two "localised" weaknesses of China were identified: a weak economic foundation and a huge population coupled with insufficient farmland. In a "globalised" approach to learning from more advanced countries, including the advancement of democracy, policies, which could fit in with the reality of modernisation under Chinese conditions, were emphasised. The key

Modernisations" dated October 11, 1978 in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1975-1982)*. Foreign Language Press: Beijing, China, p.150.

³⁸² Deng, Xiaoping (1987) "Build A Socialist Society With Both High Material And High Cultural And Ideological Standards" In *Fundamental Issues In Present-Day China*. Foreign Languages Press: Beijing, PRC., p.17.

points were to strengthen collective leadership, tighten organisation and discipline, and create stability of the socio-political order, so that a modernisation process in its infancy, would not be hampered by unnecessary resistance.

There is a need to set boundaries in order to achieve “specific effects of power”.³⁸³ These are expressed in the four cardinal principles:

1. Uphold the socialist road
2. Uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat
3. Uphold the leadership of the Communist Party
4. Uphold Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought³⁸⁴

The ideological significance is represented by its position as an extension of the discourses of Marx, Lenin and Mao in a new context. These discourses are maintained because if they were abandoned, the significance of the existence of the Communist Party would be brought into question, the legitimacy of the ruling power of the CCP would be withdrawn, and the legitimacy of Deng’s succession of leadership after Mao would be deposed. The entire socialist cause and China’s

³⁸³ Foucault, M. (1991) *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault’s thought*. Paul Rabinow (ed.), Penguin: London, U.K. p.73.

³⁸⁴ Deng, Xiaoping, (1983) “Uphold The Four Cardinal Principles” dated March 30, 1979 in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1975-1982)*. Foreign Language Press: Beijing, China, pp.166-191.

modernisation would be minimised if any of the four cardinal principles were violated. However, some of the ideologies of Marx, Lenin and Mao are outdated, and do not meet the needs of the current context faced by the CCP. Notwithstanding this, a balance of the inherited discourse of Marxism and the new measures has to be created to fit the new situation. “Marxist theory will advance and so will socialist theory; they will both advance as social practice and science advance.”³⁸⁵ Indeed, “statements” are to be governed in such a way “as to constitute a set of propositions which are.....acceptable”.³⁸⁶

In other words, the time has come when the ideological dialectics of Marx, Lenin and Mao on “globalisation” cannot satisfy the developmental needs of Deng’s contemporary globalisation. It comes with a crisis in belief, faith and trust: the shaking of belief in socialism, the loss of faith in the Chinese Communist Party; even Deng Xiaoping had explicitly voiced out his concern that “some people, especially young people, are sceptical about the socialist system, alleging that socialism is not as good as capitalism”.³⁸⁷ If the CCP is not able to develop a successful discursive

³⁸⁵ Deng, Xiaoping. (1987) “The Party’s Urgent Tasks On The Organizational and Ideological Fronts” dated October 12, 1983 in *Fundamental Issues In Present-Day China*. Foreign Languages Press: Beijing, PRC.,p.32.

³⁸⁶ Foucault, M. (1980) “Truth and Power” in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. (ed.) C. Gordon, trans. C. Gordon *et al.*. The Harvester Press: Sussex, U.K., p.112.

³⁸⁷ Deng, Xiaoping. “The Present Situation and Tasks Before Us” dated January 16, 1980 in Deng,

strategy which can formulate a “globalisation” concept that fits the global trend and at the same time develop a “localisation” concept that matches with the reality of China, Deng’s leadership will be in doubt and the ruling power of the CCP will lose its legitimacy. Compared to Mao, Deng is not an “ideological entrepreneur”.³⁸⁸ On this point, Chang’s comment is worth-noting: “Deng is only the *primus inter pares* and has to share the leadership role with a number of senior statesmen and must rely on a skilful mix of cajolery, compromise, and threat to keep the coalition together.”³⁸⁹

Within this context, the ideological discourse aims at an endeavour that will enable the importation of advanced technology, machinery, management and capital from capitalist states but, paradoxically, not the importation of the ideology of capitalism. In other words, the discursive formation is not capitalistic. The course of socialism locally is affirmed. However, those who, in the international arena, exercise imperialism and hegemony are rejected (imperialism and hegemony from the U.S.A and other western countries were labelled by the CCP as the top enemies).

Xiaoping. (1984) *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1975-1982)*. Foreign Languages Press: Beijing, PRC., pp.235.

³⁸⁸ This is a term used by North, D. In North, D. (1981) *Structure and Change in Economic History*. W.W. Norton & Company: New York, N.Y., p.51.

³⁸⁹ Chang, P. (1990) *Power and Policy in China* (3rded.). Kendall/Hunt Publishing: Dubuque, Iowa, p.259. (*primus inter pares* is a Latin phrase meaning “first among equals”).

By doing this, advanced technology, machinery and even capital are not labelled as capitalistic but are deemed to be useful for the advancement of socialism. The “four-modernisations of China” are to be organised in a socialist way, economically, politically, militarily, and culturally. For the construction of the new “truth”, there is a need to reiterate the advantage of Marxist ideology over other ideologies. The socialist system is superior to the capitalist system. If socialism is always associated with poverty, it will not stand firm, but will fall. The key point is to be able to emancipate thought, to discover truth from facts. It is advocated that a market economy does not exist in capitalist societies alone but also in socialist societies. Learning some of the good practices of capitalist states does not equate with practising capitalism. Capitalist measures can be utilised as ways and means to develop productive forces. Utilising these measures correctly will not affect socialism negatively—will not involve a return to capitalism. With this, the way to push for open reform under the framework of ideological dialectics for the modernisation of China is paved. It is a complex operation of power/knowledge, the essence of which is fabricated.

In the fabrication process there are at times, “wrong ideas inside the Party”.³⁹⁰

It is also admitted that, “the Party [is].....inadequately prepared ideologically for all-round socialist construction”.³⁹¹ The discourse of localism maintains that the automatic copying and application of foreign experience and models will get China nowhere. The main argument in fact is: “China’s affairs should be run in the light of China’s specific conditions and by the Chinese people themselves. Independence and self-reliance have always been and will always be [China’s] basic stand”.³⁹² In the process of opening up China within globalism to attract foreign investment and technology, there exists a localism of self-development based on China’s strength.³⁹³

The dialectical outcome is: accept the “globalisation” economic model of capitalism but reject the “globalisation” of capitalistic political democracy; and accept the “localised” four cardinal principles but reject the “localised” crisis of the Cultural Revolution. The rationale is that the success of the CCP depends on adherence to the “globalised” idealism of Marx and a “localised” Chinese reality for solving China’s external and internal problems. The validity of Marxism continues to be the source of

³⁹⁰ Deng, Xiaoping. (1983) “Opening Speech At The Twelfth National Congress Of The CPC” dated September 1, 1982 in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1975-1982)*. Foreign Language Press: Beijing, PRC., p.394-397.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² Deng, Xiaoping. (1983) “Opening Speech At The Twelfth National Congress Of The CPC” dated September 1, 1982 in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1975-1982)*. Foreign Language Press: Beijing, PRC., p.394-397.

³⁹³ Deng, Xiaoping. (1994) “Our Magnificent Goal And Basic Policies” dated October 6, 1984 in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping Vol. III (1982-1992)*. Foreign Languages Press: Beijing, PRC., p.p.85-87.

truth and rectitude, and forms the basis of socio-political advancement of China.

5.4 Educational Discourse Under Dengism

Deng's interpretation of Marxism-Leninism has, under his leadership, shaped many of the ideas on education and the impact on educational (in)equity in the name of national interest, in a globalised world. In simple terms, it is to answer the question "What is good or bad for the PRC?". In Lenin's words, it is "Who stands to gain?",³⁹⁴ or in a more elaborate way, "What is important is who stands to gain from these views, proposals, measures."³⁹⁵

The educational discourse, and hence policy, under Deng's leadership is a modernisation and globalisation oriented discourse revealing a re-orientation in the ways of dialectical thinking about the world and the PRC's position in the contemporary, global economic-political context.³⁹⁶ From an ideological perspective, it is a dialectic working towards finding the correct route of transition from socialist society to communist society. For an inscription for the Beijing Jingshan School, Deng wrote vividly in 1983: "Education should be geared to the needs of

³⁹⁴ Lenin, V.I. (1968) *V.I. Lenin: Collected Works Vol.19*. Progress Publishing: Moscow, USSR., p.53.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Globalisation and modernisation are closely associated. See Dirlik, A. (2007) *Global Modernity: Modernity in the Age of Global Capitalism*. Paradigm Publishers: Boulder, Colorado.

modernisation, of the world and of the future.”³⁹⁷ It is for the future of the PRC and the future of global Communism. There is a coherent ideological commitment to globalisation with a purpose of advancement of socialism both in the PRC and across the globe. It is about opening the PRC to the outside world, aligning the PRC with the world economic system and developing the socialist economy of the PRC by utilising advanced science and technology.³⁹⁸

5.4.1 Aim For the Superiority of the Socialist System

Socialism is not a mere ideological camouflage for the quest for power and wealth, because Chinese communists are concerned with the fundamental question of seeking the knowledge/truth for the type of modern country they want to build and the means of building it. Reassessment of the socialist system becomes a means to gain new “truth”. Under Deng, the ideological paradigm in China shifted from an ultra-political orientation to an economic political orientation. Ideological aspiration was expected for the “superiority of the socialist system”,³⁹⁹ locally in China and globally in the world. In his effort to find a correct route of transition from socialist

³⁹⁷ Deng, Xiaoping (1987) *Fundamental Issues in Present-Day China*. Foreign Languages Press: Beijing, PRC., p.23.

³⁹⁸ Wu, J. (1996) *On Deng Xiaoping Thought*. Foreign Language Press: Beijing, PRC., p.52.

³⁹⁹ Deng, Xiaoping (1983) “Hold High the Banner of Mao Zedong Thought And Adhere To The Principle Of Seeking Truth From Facts” in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1975-1982)*. Foreign Language Press: Beijing, China, p.143.

society to communist society, Deng Xiaoping has opted for putting economic construction as the prime task, following the Marxist discourse that the forces of production determine relations of production and that the conditions for production and material conditions shape the foundations for entering into communist society.⁴⁰⁰

In this context, enhancement of the cultural, scientific and technological levels of the masses becomes the primary requirement for the building of a communist material base. The task of education was advocated as primarily the teaching of knowledge and technology, led by experts and with the emphasis on modernising the mode of education, alongside leading global trends. School, which is the place to develop and nurture human resources, should focus on teaching and students should focus on learning and studying, and not on political activities.

Education indeed went through a de-politicisation process in the post-Mao era.⁴⁰¹ In this era of reform, ideological matters were directed under two principles: i) abolish outdated theories and restrictions so as to create space for new development

⁴⁰⁰ A discussion of this subject can be found in Deng Xiaoping's discussion with a delegation including senior American entrepreneurs, organised by Time Inc. See "There Is No Fundamental Contradiction Between Socialism and a Market Economy" of October 23, 1985. In *Deng, Xiaoping (1994) Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping Vol. III*. Foreign Languages Press: Beijing, PRC., p.151-153.

⁴⁰¹ For a detailed discussion on this, see Luo, Y. (2002) *Politicization and Depoliticization of Education in the People's Republic of China*. Ph.D. Thesis: University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong.

and ii) identify and pick those elements from Marxism that allow rationalisation of new measures.⁴⁰² Blind worshiping of Mao was discouraged and the copying of the Stalinist model was criticised. It is a multi-discursive struggle. Marxism was depicted as being unable to resolve all the ideological issues that had occurred under the new historical conditions because many of the new things and new experiences that began to appear in practical life were beyond the imagination of the old days.⁴⁰³ The interpretation: “Poverty is not Socialism, nor is it Communism” prevailed;⁴⁰⁴ Mao’s theories of revolutionism, egalitarianism and “overcoming selfishness and fostering public spirit” were masked by the discourse that they hindered economic development.⁴⁰⁵ There is a need to derive new theory, new “truth” of socialism in China. The key to achieving the four modernisations is education. The clear message is that it is important to learn and acquire “globalised” science and technology for the “localised” advancement of the PRC and subsequently contribute to the progress of global socialism.

⁴⁰² Shaw, Y. (1988) *Changes and Continuities in Chinese Communism Volume1: Ideology, Politics, and Foreign Policy*. Westview Press: Boulder, Colorado., p.159.

⁴⁰³ Shaw, Y. (1988) *Changes and Continuities in Chinese Communism Volume1: Ideology, Politics, and Foreign Policy*. Westview Press: Boulder, Colorado., p.154.

⁴⁰⁴ Deng Xiaoping said in the meeting with president of Yugoslavia, Radovan Vlackovic, on April 4, 1986, that the Marxist viewpoint definitely does not equate communism with poverty. See Ta Kung Pao, April 5, 1986, p.1.

⁴⁰⁵ Shaw, Y. (1988) *Changes and Continuities in Chinese Communism Volume1: Ideology, Politics, and Foreign Policy*. Westview Press: Boulder, Colorado., p.159.

The CCP maintained that the PRC remains essentially a socialist state, notwithstanding that it is at the “primary stage of socialism”. Historical observation had led to the conclusion that “keeping to socialism is of vital importance for China. If China...[takes] the capitalist road, it would be a disaster [not merely for China, but] for the world.”⁴⁰⁶ It was admitted that “building socialism is no easy job”⁴⁰⁷ because on the one hand, the PRC has to “achieve genuine political independence”,⁴⁰⁸ and “lift itself out of poverty”;⁴⁰⁹ while on the other hand, it “should not erect barriers to cut itself off from the world”.⁴¹⁰ Alongside this view, the CCP policies being formulated are for nurturing and consolidating necessary local socio-economic and material pre-conditions for a fully developed Chinese socialist state. A key factor is China’s “great capacity of assimilation”.⁴¹¹

Guided ideological change serves to sustain an ideological hegemony, which in turn contributes to political and social stability. There was a clear need for the liberation of China’s economy and integration with the contemporary world economy

⁴⁰⁶ Deng, Xiaoping. (1994) “Keeping To Socialism And The Policy Of Peace” dated April 6, 1986 In *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping Vol. III (1982-1992)*. Foreign Languages Press: Beijing, PRC., p.161.

⁴⁰⁷ Deng, Xiaoping (1987) “Promote Education In The Four Cardinal Principles And Adhere To The Policies of Reform And of Opening To The Outside World” in *Fundamental Issues in Present-Day China*. Foreign Languages Press: Beijing, PRC, p.173.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

is in the best interest of the PRC. The importance of education was re-emphasised, affirming the position and function of education in the economic and social development of the state with the following essence:

- a. Education is going to improve the forces of production.

The basic elements of production are information and labour. The new understanding of the concept of “labour” is not limited to manual labour but includes intellectual labour and extends to scientific knowledge, production experience and production technique; the most dynamic element is people who are able to make use of instruments for production and those who bring about the production of material information. To enhance the forces of production, the most important element is to enhance knowledge and wisdom of those who “labour”.

- b. Education is the foundation of scientific technology.

Marx’s discourse that the forces of production include science is highlighted; that is, it is understood to be within the framework of the forces of production. In order to grasp and foster contemporary scientific technology

and achieve a breakthrough in theoretical research, education is essential.

Education is the base for China to establish a team of world-class scientists and engineering experts. The task of education is not only about the nourishment of scientific human resources but, more importantly, the transmission and development of scientific technology itself, for continuous advancement towards the establishment of “localised” communist China and a “globalised” communist world in the future.

c. Education is at the forefront of building spiritual civilisation of socialism.

As for spiritual civilisation, it does not only refer to education, science and culture but more importantly to the principles and standpoint of the thought, beliefs, ethics and revolution of communism. The core of socialist spiritual civilisation is the “localised” thought of Chinese communism. The building of a socialist spiritual civilisation is to be accomplished through education. It is only through education that the thought of Chinese communism is able to be transmitted to the next generation, nurturing them to become people with socialist ideals, ethics, knowledge and physical strength.

A new educational discourse is being injected into the socialist system in China. In essence, education is “to serve socialist construction better”.⁴¹² The modernism and economism within the educational discourse of this period is a diversion from Mao’s claim that education must serve proletariat politics. The micro political situation of that time was sensitive. In order not to damage the image of Mao and at the same time match with the fundamental principle of Marxism-Leninism, the CCP attempted to make use of new historical conditions to support an improved interpretation so as to include new elements within its ideological boundaries. They recognised that the term “politics” in the past had been narrowly and fragmentarily explained as “class struggle” which was a critical element of Mao’s discourse of “permanent revolution”.⁴¹³ Consequently, the discourse of “education must serve proletarian politics” was linked to class struggle and permanent revolution.⁴¹⁴ Education was guided by political movements, missing the point that, to “serve proletarian politics”,⁴¹⁵ means fundamentally the nurturing of suitable human resources for the advancement of Chinese Socialism.

⁴¹² Deng, Xiaoping (1987) “Speech at the National Conference on Education” dated 22 April, 1978 in Maxwell, R. (ed.) *Deng Xiaoping Speeches and Writings Second Expanded Edition*. Pergamon Press: Oxford, England, p.54.

⁴¹³ Chen, T. (1974) *The Maoist Educational Revolution*. Praeger Publishers: New York, N.Y., p.3.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.,p.30-32.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., p.30.

For this to happen, the new mandate has become to “create a new situation in all fields of socialist modernization and bring prosperity to [the CCP], [China’s] socialist cause, [China] and the people of all nationalities.”⁴¹⁶ The CCP emphasised that, under different historical stages, there are different revolutionary tasks and different work focuses; hence different requirements for education. Education as a means to serve “the revolutionary road”⁴¹⁷ was, under the new regime, to acquire a new interpretation: to “train workers with a high level of scientific and general knowledge and build a vast army of working class intellectuals”⁴¹⁸ and “to attain a productivity of labour higher than that under capitalism”⁴¹⁹ by “making education an integral component of the national economic plan”.⁴²⁰ This is aimed to achieve the magnificent goal of the four modernisations of the PRC.⁴²¹ The purpose of education was to nurture a variety of human resources that are culturally of a high level while maintaining socialist consciousness so as to complete the process of the four modernisations, “attain a productivity of labour higher than that under capitalism”,⁴²²

⁴¹⁶ Ibid, p.86.

⁴¹⁷ Deng, Xiaoping. (1994) “We are Building a Socialist Society With Both High Material Standards and High Cultural and Ethical Standards” of April 29, 1983. in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping Vol. III(1982-1992)*. Foreign Languages Press: Beijing, PRC., pp.37-

⁴¹⁸ Deng, Xiaoping. (1984) “Speech at the National Conference on Education” of April 22, 1978. in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1975-1982)*. Foreign Languages Press: Beijing, PRC., pp.120.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid.

⁴²⁰ Ibid., p.124.

⁴²¹ Deng, Xiaoping. (1987) *Fundamental Issues in Present-day China*. Foreign Languages Press: Beijing, PRC., p.67.

⁴²² Deng, Xiaoping (1987) “Speech at the National Conference on Education 22April, 1978” in Maxwell, R. (ed.) *Deng Xiaoping Speeches and Writings Second Expanded Edition*. Pergamon Press: Oxford, England, p.55.

and to “defeat bourgeoisie in the superstructure”,⁴²³ that is, culturally and system-wise. These settings in themselves are in fact services to proletariat politics.

To ensure political survival and to master the process of policy-making, the “ideological state apparatus” did not play down Mao’s view that education has to be steered by politics. Instead, the CCP was creative enough to advance a new interpretation. Making politics the first priority for students no longer meant to “abandon the study of science, social sciences and humanities. On the contrary, the higher the students’ political consciousness, the more consciously and diligently they will apply themselves to the study of these subjects for the sake of the revolution.”⁴²⁴

A scientist who does not oppose the regime of the CCP, and who makes contributions to science, is a representation of a good citizen of the PRC. Those who spend their efforts on the necessity of science and on the business of production and research but not political activities are also considered as a reflection of their serving “proletariat politics” and “socialist consciousness”. These renewed interpretations creatively preserve Marxist views and, at the same time, hold the discourses ideologically justifiable. Arguably, the CCP has created “a certain type of discourse whose gradual

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

transformation.....broke not only with the ‘true’ propositions which it had hitherto been possible to formulate but also , more profoundly, with the way of speaking and seeing, the whole ensemble of practices which served as supports for [educational] knowledge. These are not simply new discoveries; there is a whole new ‘regime’ in discourse and form of knowledge.”⁴²⁵

5.5 Dengism and Rural Inequity of Compulsory Education

The 1985 policy of a nine-year compulsory education, consisting of 6 years of primary education plus 3 years of junior-secondary education, was promulgated in the era in which ideological dialectics of socialism for the PRC was re-evaluated. The aim of the policy was to prepare a new generation of competent and developmental-oriented masses of Chinese socialism. This is a double-edged policy given the unfavourable socio-economic realities of the PRC in the middle of 1980s and the fragile national funding base for education as a whole and compulsory education in particular. The reality was that overall there was insufficient funding for national investment in compulsory education.⁴²⁶ The situation was even worse for

⁴²⁵ Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon *et al.* The Harvester Press: Sussex, U.K., p.112.

⁴²⁶ Tsang, M. (1994) *The financing of education in Shaanxi and Guizhou*. Report prepared for the World Bank: Washington, DC. And Tsang, M. (1994) “Costs of education in China: Issues of resource mobilization, equality and efficiency”. *Education Economics*. Vol.2, No.3, pp.287-312.

those students in rural areas. Alongside the nine-year compulsory education policy was the discourse of de-centralisation, which resulted in diverse changes in educational administration and finance under the principle that lower levels of government should take the responsibility for the provision, including the finances, of compulsory education. Under the new system, primary schools were financed by rural villages (*cun 村*), junior secondary schools by towns and townships (*xiangzhen 乡镇*), and senior secondary schools by counties (*xian 县*). Paradoxically, central government was released from its responsibility for compulsory education. The disadvantaged rural areas, with their poor economic and financial base and inability to raise revenues for education, were faced with inadequate resources to maintain educational inputs including school buildings and facilities, educational equipment, teaching staff, books and auxiliary instruction materials. There were unpaid teachers, damaged school facilities and a lack of equipment and materials for instruction.⁴²⁷

Major resources were allocated to the urban areas. While it aimed at enhancing local incentives to develop compulsory education, the decentralisation policy resulted in significant disparity and inequality of educational development in China.⁴²⁸ As

⁴²⁷ See Tsang, M. (1994) *The financing of education in Shaanxi and Guizhou*. Report prepared for the World Bank: Washington, DC. And Tsang, M. (1994) "Costs of education in China: Issues of resource mobilization, equality, equity and efficiency". in *Education Economics*. Vol.2, No. 3, pp.287-312.

⁴²⁸ Ngok, K. (2007) "Chinese Education Policy in the Context of Decentralization and Marketization: Evolution and Implications". in *Asia Pacific Education Review*. Vol. 8, No.1, pp.142-157.

shown in a survey of nine provinces, 70 out the 374 counties studied had a per-student budget of less than US\$11 for primary education as compared to an average of US\$22 for the whole country in 1990.⁴²⁹

Compulsory education is not only an educational issue, but is one which has to be understood from social, economic and political perspectives. Meanwhile, educational (in)equity is affected by two types of factors, namely, intrinsic factors and contingent factors. Intrinsic factors are those that enable the formation of a premise favourable for educational equity and without which contingent factors become difficult to function. These factors include the nature of society, social system, social structure, economy and the level of social development under a specific period, traditional culture, allocation of education rights, allocation of education resources and most importantly the prevalent ideology of the state. These are in turn inter-related. Contingent factors possess a supplementary function and, under the framework of intrinsic factors, affect the degree of realisation of educational equity. They include the social background, religious background, family background, sex, social status and economic status of students.

⁴²⁹ See Tsang, M.C. (1996) "Financial Reform of Basic Education in China". in *Economics of Education Review*. Vol.15, No.4, pp.423-444.

Educational (in)equity is in itself a discourse and at the same time an outcome of the discourse. It is political struggle between expressions of how the country should be structured, resources distributed and authority exercised. As reflected in the urban-rural polarity of the compulsory education system, it is a result of economism and the policy on globalisation and localisation. When education is viewed as an investment, the input of resources may not have a direct immediate effect. The overall gain for the country will only be realised in the future. The educational thrust in the PRC is directed towards globalism as it explicitly declares that it is about serving the purpose of building socialism and affirms an identity of interest with the proletariat throughout the world. While education is targeted for economic growth, forming a viable foundation, for the demonstration of the superiority of socialism, it comes with an aim of emancipating the minds of the masses. The advocacy is that “emancipating the mind is a vital political task”.⁴³⁰ This forms a rationale for the re-configuration of socialism in the PRC.

Ideologically, emancipation entails the addition of new elements to the ideology of Mao’s position so that a new relationship between the superstructure and

⁴³⁰ Deng, Xiaoping, (1983) “Emancipate The Mind, Seek Truth From Facts And Unite As One In Looking To the Future” dated December 13, 1978 in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping (1975-1982)*. Foreign Language Press: Beijing, China, p.152.

the productive forces can be re-constructed in the midst of speeding up productive forces. The official perspective is directed towards a more open system than Mao's closed system. The analysis concludes that it is not possible to speed up productive forces for the entire country at the same time. There is a need to allow time for things to be accomplished. The CCP saw the need for a re-conceptualisation and practically a re-configuration of socialism in the PRC. For them, it was necessary to disengage the state from the idealistic approach to socialism that was prevalent in the Mao era and before. The previous approach was considered "unrealistic because it emphasized [too much] the normative requirements of socialism, not its material prerequisites".⁴³¹ Reason itself however does not have a transcendent status. Rationality may not be universal; rationality or reason is "born from chance", that is, historical dynamics of complex practices "slowly forged the weapons of reason".⁴³² Under such a view, the official strategy is to get some of the people (the coastal regions) rich first, to enjoy the fruits of economic development and then eventually expand the influence to other regions and finally, in the future, to the whole country. The target, and in fact the starting point of consideration, is the future. Under the

⁴³¹ Sun, Y. (1995) *The Chinese Reassessment of Socialism. 1976-1992*. Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey., p.200.

⁴³² Foucault, M. (2003) "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" in *The essential Foucault: selections from the essential works of Foucault 1954-1984*. P. Rabinow and N. Rose (ed.) New Press: New York/London, pp. 351-369.

prevalent global and local context, the CCP understands that it has to accomplish an effective neutralisation of the competing objectives facing the CCP which include economic development, political mobilisation and transformation, and establishment of socialist equity and military strength.⁴³³ This can be understood from the point that “ideologies are by their very nature oriented to a particular political and social situation”.⁴³⁴ The ideological discourses prevalent under Deng’s era are no exception.

It is here that the official ideological position of Deng’s era departs from the core values of Mao’s dialectics and the Marxist view on equity. By advocating “let some people get rich first”,⁴³⁵ the CCP’s handling of the (in)equity element under Deng’s leadership within socialist ideology came about from a rather twisted perspective. Ambivalent beliefs and currents are embodied. The inspiration that equity is an elemental quality of socialism has never been forsaken. It also reveals the essential superiority of socialism over capitalism. However, the CCP re-formulates the concept of equity, shifting it away from Mao’s “regimes of truth”⁴³⁶

⁴³³ Naughton, B. “Deng Xiaoping: The Economist” in Shambaugh, D. (ed.) (1995) *Deng Xiaoping: Portrait of a Chinese Statesman*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, England., p. 93.

⁴³⁴ Freedon, M. (1996) *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*. Clarendon Press: Oxford, U.K., p.113.

⁴³⁵ Naughton, B. (1995) “Deng Xiaoping: The Economist” in Shambaugh, D. (ed.) (1995) *Deng Xiaoping: Portrait of a Chinese Statesman*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, U.K., p.93.

⁴³⁶ Foucault, M. (1980) “Truth and power”. in C. Gordon (ed.) *Power/Knowledge: Selected interviews*

which include proletarianism, revolutionism and egalitarianism towards one with less politically restricting boundaries. The formulation sees that the superiority of socialism over capitalism is reflected in the avoidance of polarisation,⁴³⁷ the achievement of common prosperity⁴³⁸ and the elimination of poverty.⁴³⁹ This new combination of ideas enables a visionary commitment to a broad-based discourse of socialist equity while maintaining that in the short-term equity should be subordinated to economism in the name of national interest.

Regarding this, Schurmann is right to say that China's "practical ideology has its roots in the experience of particular individuals",⁴⁴⁰ not necessarily the visionary view of the Chinese proletariat as a whole. There is a tension between the pure ideology, of global Marxism, and the practical ideology of Maoism and Dengism localised in China. Meanwhile, this particular historical moment allows "a special significance in determining the dominant meanings of the political concepts

and other writings, 1972-1977. Harvester Press: Sussex, U.K., p.132.

⁴³⁷ Deng, Xiaoping. (1987) "Reform Is the Only Way For China To Develop Its Productive Forces" dated August 28, 1985 in *Fundamental Issues In Present-Day China*. Foreign Language Press: Beijing, PRC.,p.124

⁴³⁸ Deng, Xiaoping. (1987) "Speech At The National Conference Of The Communist Party Of China" dated September 23, 1985 in *Fundamental Issues In Present-Day China*. Foreign Language Press: Beijing, PRC.,p.127-128.

⁴³⁹ Deng, Xiaoping (1987) "We Must Continue To Build Socialism And Eliminate Poverty" in *Fundamental Issues In Present-Day China*. Foreign Language Press: Beijing, PRC.,p.174-179.

⁴⁴⁰ Schurmann, F. (1968) *Ideology and Organization in Communist China* (2nded.) University of California Press: Berkeley, CA, p.31.

comprising an ideology”⁴⁴¹---socialism as an intermediate stage in the journey towards communism. Marxism remains as the “truth”. Official rationality acts in the form of a concept to regulate individual discourses and sets of practices (such as Mao’s discourse of intellectualisation of labour and the labourisation of intellectuals or Deng’s discourse of “let some people get rich first”). Official discourse assures the masses that Marxism is “truth” and that the concept of replacement of capitalism by socialism is also “truth”, and “truths” are not to be negated. Adversity and regression are however inevitable, in fact natural, in the construction of a new socialist world moving towards global communism. The process of socialist construction will not be achieved by words, but by deeds. Attempts are made to minimise unfruitful theoretical debates.

By holding on to the concept of the primary stage, the CCP is able to address its distinctiveness and at the same time pinpoint the uniqueness of its historical position. In this, Chinese Socialism is differentiated from the global idealism of Marx and socialism in other parts of the globe. At this stage, the socialist system and production of relations are not meant to be perfect. This discourse of “imperfect-ness”

⁴⁴¹ Freeden, M. (1996) *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*. Clarendon Press: Oxford, U.K., p.115.

forms a justification for not formulating all policies and actions to stride towards ideal socialism. The primary stage of Chinese socialism is expected to last over one hundred years during which constant reforms are expected.⁴⁴² This view has resulted in the state being “high about and far away, and quite miserly in provision of resources, while at the same time very strict in limiting peasant options”.⁴⁴³ Rural students covered by the compulsory education scheme have become victims.

China needs to search for viable answers for her continuation on the road of socialism. There is no blueprint left by Marx as to how exactly China’s socialism should proceed. In Deng’s era, dialectics of globalism and localism is powered by the discourses of “seek truth from reality” and “seek truth from practice”. The discourses of “seek truth from reality” and “seek truth from practice” form a basis for the theoretical foundation for a re-configuration of the orthodox version of Marxism and socialism to become Chinese Marxism and Chinese Socialism. It however does not mean that all elements of the orthodox versions of Marxism and socialism have to be re-configured; only those that fit well with the reality of the PRC are selected. The

⁴⁴² Sun, Y. (1995) *The Chinese Reassessment of Socialism. 1976-1992*. Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey., pp. 200-202.

⁴⁴³ Whyte, M.K., “Do Chinese citizens want the government to do more to promote equality?” in Gries, P. H. and Rosen, S. (eds.) (2010) *Chinese Politics: State, Society and the Market*. Routledge: Abingdon, Oxon., p.150.

content is not changed, nor is the theoretical form. There are however new statements that interweave with each other, structuring a new basis to justify a “localised” Chinese socialist system based on the rationality of its particular reality. The existence of educational inequity which has resulted from the urban-rural polarity is hence able to be justified by the particular reality of the PRC. “The cat theory of truth”, which says “it does not matter whether a cat is white or black; as long as it catches mice, it is a good cat”, allows the (in)equity issue on educational policy to be interpreted in this manner: it does not matter whether there is educational equity among rural and urban students, as long as the national educational policy is able to enhance the forces of production, strengthen the overall national power of the state and the raising of living standards of the socialist PRC as a whole. In the longer term, it is a good policy under Socialism with Chinese characteristics. In practical terms, a tolerable level of inequity within the socialist structure is acceptable.

Dialectically, urban and rural form a unity of polarities, they are both indispensable. However, urban development comes first in the priority list for treatment under the primary stage of Chinese socialism. As Adams has pointed out, “[a]lthough ideologies are concerned with large and distant questions about the best

kind of society and the ideal way to live, they are also closely bound up with practical political activities”.⁴⁴⁴ Chinese politics, like politics elsewhere, is about compromising conflicting views with an aim for decisions on practical actions—actions that eventually would lead to the ideal communist society.

This is consistent with the CCP’s continual articulation of certain elements which it finds legitimate in its dialectical argument. These elements also enable the drawing of the conclusion that both the planned economy and the market economy can be socialist. Not to be missed out also is that, for the powerful voice of Deng, the problem of education does not depend on funding. He once opined that, “the difficulty of school education is in educational reform, not in funding. The greatest problem is direction.....”⁴⁴⁵ The direction, of course, must come from the governing party. Equity, reflected in the allocation of funding, is something for the future, which his successors will handle.

⁴⁴⁴ Adams, I. (2001) *Political Ideology Today* (2nd ed.). Manchester University Press: Manchester, England., p.3.

⁴⁴⁵ Deng, Xiaoping. “The Party needs to act on educational matters” dated 18th Jan, 1981 in *Deng Xiaoping on Education*., p. 2. [This is in Chinese: 鄧小平, “黨要過問學校教育工作” 18-01-1981 鄧小平論教育, 2.]

5.6 Conclusion

Although education is comparatively de-politicised under Deng's leadership, educational inequity continues but shifts to another paradigm. Legally and in terms of policy, statements are directed towards "everyone has equal right to education" and "everyone has a right to equal education". Nine-year compulsory education policy is constituted and law enacted. However, modernism and economism dominate the overriding discourses for educational equity. The bias of urban economic development leaves many inland rural areas in extreme poverty. Inequity of educational access increases, as rural families are unable to afford to send their children to school. Insufficient funding for the rural areas has led to the persisting reality of backward teaching facilities and sub-standard teachers, contributing to the low quality of education; and eventually deepens the problems of inequity in educational participation and in educational attainment. Without good quality education, many rural students are kept away from the opportunity of higher education and higher paid careers, extending inequity of life chances.

Unlike the works of White and Zhang which argue that communist China has

become capitalist and the opening policy has brought in de-ideologisation,⁴⁴⁶ this study, by re-constructing Deng's speeches and writings, has argued that the official ideological dialectics of globalism and localism continue to be key and back up strategies and policies. The ultimate belief continues that socialism and Marxism will win because Marxism is truth. To reach the communist advanced stage, however, is not a straight road but one that encounters dialectical changes. Paradoxically, ambivalence along the route is accepted. If social justice and equity are characterised by equal worth of all citizens, equal rights to receive basic education, equal rights to be able to meet basic needs, endeavours to broaden prospects and life opportunities as extensively as possible and by the government's effort to diminish and where possible eradicate unjustified inequity, the discourses of modernism and economism do not provide the conditions for these to happen. Instead, they nurture structural educational inequity.

The CCP is "subjected to the production of truth through power and [it] cannot exercise power except through the production of truth".⁴⁴⁷ The notion of

⁴⁴⁶ See White, G. "The Decline of Ideocracy" in Benewick, R. and Wingrove, P. (eds.) (1995) *China in the 1990s*. Macmillan: London, England., pp.23-24. And Zhang, W. (1996) *Ideology and Economic Reform under Deng Xiaoping 1978-1993*. Kegan Paul International: London, England., p.7.

⁴⁴⁷ Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*. ed. Colin Gordon Pantheon: New York, N.Y., p.93.

governmentality enables us to see Chinese ideological dialectics as a technology of the domination of others and of the CCP itself. Ideological discourses function to shape—shaping the leaders as well as the general public. They subject people to specific socio-political arrangements and characterise them for the distinctive roles they perform. In the process of subjection, characterisation, ideology and discourse gradually mould people. Ideological formation informs people of what exists, who they are, how the nation and the globe are and how each of them is connected to the nation and the globe. The dominance of modernism and economism solidifies the differential urban-rural structure, making it more visible at the level of socio-political reality and an acceptable reality. At the time ideology projects what exists, it also relates people to what is right or wrong, good or bad and hence determines the conception of legitimacy.

Rural educational inequity is structurally legitimised in the PRC under Deng's leadership by reference to a variety of ideological discourses which attempt to explain the necessity and legitimacy of the forms of inequity. The black and white cat theory directs people to focus on productivity and efficiency as right and good actions for socialism; the legitimacy of the CCP, as the “ideological state apparatus”,

hence rests on its ability to improve them locally and connect them with the global reality. Ideological discourse also projects to people what is possible—depicts various levels of aspiration. In this aspect, official statements advocate that the advanced stage of communism will only be possible after the primary stage of socialism, a stage in which social injustice and inequity should be tolerated. There is an on-going holding on to the Marxist “universal truth” by the CCP, whose mission is to fulfil its historical destiny—communism—via the primary stage of socialism to the advanced stage of socialism. The CCP continues to commit to the “universal truth” of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought and re-configure the web of discourses in the ideological paradigm in order for the Chinese communist to localise Marxism to the concrete exercise of the PRC revolution and modernisation in accordance with the transformations of specific conditions. In fact, many of the innovations are renovations within the same basic framework but with official re-interpretations. From here we shall proceed further into the post-Deng era to examine the continuation of the CCP manoeuvre.

Chapter Six

The Discourse of Harmonism—transformation for social justice?

Two decades on, Deng's drive for economic growth and productivity has resulted in serious challenges to the governance of the Chinese Communist Party. The trade-off between economism and equity has turned into a severe challenge to the CCP. Problems of corruption, social injustice and social unrest have erupted.⁴⁴⁸ In their chapter "Corruption in China: Crisis or Constant?", Bergsten, C. *et al* have described the fight against corruption by the CCP as a life and death matter.⁴⁴⁹ Indeed, corruption in China is not a new problem as it has existed since the imperial period. There was an anti-corruption campaign in Mao's era in 1951-52 and was repeated in 1963-65. The above authors further highlight that in the first two decades of Deng's reform, corruption had climbed to a high-level and became intensified because the stakes involved rose and the scope for higher-level corruption had increased.⁴⁵⁰ In their view, a major reason for the intensity of the problem is deficient central-local relationships, which do not enable an effective check of the

⁴⁴⁸ Susan Shirk provides a concise description of mass protest, ethnic unrest and rural unrest in her "Domestic Threats" in Shirk, S. (2007) *China: Fragile Superpower*. Oxford University Press: New York, N.Y. pp.35-61.

⁴⁴⁹ Bergsten, C. et al (eds.) (2008) *China's Rise: Challenges and Opportunities*. Peterson Institute For International Economics, Centre For Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC., pp.91-104.

⁴⁵⁰ Bergsten, C. et al (eds.) (2008) *China's Rise: Challenges and Opportunities*. Peterson Institute For International Economics, Centre For Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC., p.93.

rising level of local corruption. A maze of local “mafia states” has been formed by alliances of corrupt officials and criminal networks and the use of official authority for private plunder is widely observed.⁴⁵¹ Han also highlights that “[a] sense of common human trust, decency, dignity, compassion, and civility is quietly disappearing in many places.”⁴⁵²

Tension has been raised to a level that generates a threat of political instability. One of the top priorities of the new leadership under Hu Jintao (as president of the state) and Wen Jiabao (as premier of the state) is to explore a new direction and resolution. The concept of governmentality enables an understanding that political rationality implies discursive problematisation and categorisation of the practices of the government. As has been discussed in chapter 2, the articulation of morality directs government to ideals and ultimate values. The construction of knowledge/“truth” justifies proposed actions. The arrangement of a language and format that is “thinkable” permits it to be governable. The discourse of harmonism is constructed with these characteristics that prevail in socio-political decisions. By

⁴⁵¹ Bergsten, C. et al (eds.) (2008) *China’s Rise: Challenges and Opportunities*. Peterson Institute For International Economics, Centre For Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC., p.91.

⁴⁵² Han, A.G. “Building a Harmonious Society and Achieving Individual Harmony” In Guo, S. and Guo,B. (eds.) (2008) *China in Search of a Harmonious Society*. Lexington Books: Lanham, MD., p.16.

prioritising social equity as a fundamental ideological discourse, the Chinese Communist regime is able to hold onto the core tenets of Marxism. Necessary measures to minimise inequity of rural compulsory education become more possible.

In this chapter, we shall initially contextualise rural educational (in)equity in the early 21st century socio-political situation which prompts the need for new governing discourses. Jiang Zemin's theory of "Three Represents" is then indicated as a buffer step for the creation of harmonism, which performs the function of enhancement and stabilising legitimacy of the CCP. With this, the ideological dialectics for the formation of harmonism is analysed, re-emphasising the dialectical linkage between Marxism and traditional Chinese political concepts. Changes occur as an outcome of this dialectical endeavour, leading to a positive impact towards an equity-strengthening compulsory educational policy and implementation.

6.1 Rural Educational (In)equity in the early 21st Century

The concept of governmentality, when extended, permits us to understand that when a government faces challenges and attempts to resolve or rectify a problem, political rationalities are integrated into the formulation and implementation of

governmental policy. Before we analyse the rationality of harmonism and its impact on rural education, it is advisable to understand the challenges faced by the CCP in the 21st century.

In the first decade of the 21st century, many rural citizens continued to face the problems of limited educational opportunities, deteriorated process equity (receipt of poor schooling) and/or sub-standard attainment. The problem of educational inequity in rural China had become acute, especially when peasants discovered themselves being marginalised economically and socially.⁴⁵³ In the three decades of open policy and reform since 1978, the PRC has encountered tremendous transformations and changes, economically and socially. The economic transformations have allowed some sectors of the population to get rich while the same process has resulted in the widening of the gap between the wealthy and the poor.⁴⁵⁴ Urban-rural and regional disparities have intensified in the context of a prevailing ideology of urbanism under Deng Xiaoping's implementation of "the proper Marxist strategy for narrowing differences among people" by "elevat[ing] the whole society" but with a priority

⁴⁵³ Khan, A.R. and Riskin, C. (2005) "China's household income and its distribution, 1995 and 2002". in *The China Quarterly*. Vol. 182, pp.356-384. And Keng, C.W. (2006) "China's unbalanced economic growth" *Journal of Contemporary China*. Vol.15,(46), pp.183-214.

⁴⁵⁴ Keng, C.W. (2006) "China's unbalanced economic growth".*Journal of Contemporary China*. Vol.15,(46), pp.183-214. And Weil, R. (2006) "Conditions of the working classes in China". *MonthlyReview*. 58 (2) .Retrieved July 11, 2010 from <http://www.forumdesalternatives.org/docs/caracas/es/Robert_Weil-Conditions_of_the_Working_Classes_in_China%7Bi%7D.pdf>.

given to the elites, mainly the city-dwellers.⁴⁵⁵

While a mere 2.5 per cent of the GDP was assigned to education in 1995, it was increased to 2.9 per cent in 2000, reaching a height of 3.41 per cent in 2002. It then dropped to 3.28 per cent in 2003 and again to another low level of 2.97 per cent of the GDP in 2004, compared with the central government's aim of spending 4 per cent of the GDP on education as recommended by the United Nations.⁴⁵⁶ Recognising the insufficient government funding for education, the State Council of the PRC instructed officials at all levels of government to deliver a strategic priority for education development in the Eleventh Five –Year Plan for 2006-2010 with commitment “to a public education system that can be accessed by all”.⁴⁵⁷

Government funding for rural compulsory education as a proportion of the total education expenditure decreased gradually from 22.98 per cent in 2000 to 19.75 per cent in 2001 and then to 18.40 per cent in 2002.⁴⁵⁸ To make matters worse, the upper

⁴⁵⁵ Sun, H. and Johnson, D. (1990) “From Ti-Yong to Gaigo to Democracy and Back Again: Education's Struggle in Communist China”. in *Contemporary Education*. Vol. 61, No.4, Summer, p.213

⁴⁵⁶ The statistics are from Chen, M. and Zhu, Z. (2008) *Discussion on Chinese Educational Expenditure*. Central Editorial Publishing: Beijing, PRC., pp.3-7. [陈鸣, 朱自锋编著. 中国教育经费论纲. 北京: 中央编译出版社, 2008., pp. 3-7.]

⁴⁵⁷ This is cited in Li, R. (2007) “Casualties of the rush to profit from schooling” in *South China Morning Post*. Jan 27, 2007.

⁴⁵⁸ Yang, D.P. (2005) “China's Education in 2003: From Growth to Reform”. in *Chinese Education and Society*. Vol. 38, No.4, pp20-21.

echelons of government have often shed responsibility for rural education to lower levels of government. On the subject of the persistence of rural educational inequity, Chung's findings of the central-local relations are useful.⁴⁵⁹ Chung stresses how the context of reform policies helps explain policy results. "The centre has been more willing to tolerate local deviation and discretion so long as they promote aggregate economic growth".⁴⁶⁰ Many rural schools encountered severe financial difficulties. As Yang has revealed, many villages became deeply in debt in their attempt to universalise compulsory education. This was partly the negative result of distorted tax reform, which ended the collection of education funds. The inability to repay debts, in many locations, had resulted in creditors sealing school gates and even violently beating up school principals and teachers. Poverty had led to many school dropouts (an estimate of 9.3 per cent) and left many of the students with an average education level below the national average.⁴⁶¹

It is hence not surprising to learn that many schools were without sufficient teaching supplies. In a survey undertaken for the western rural areas by the State

⁴⁵⁹ Chung, J.H. "Reappraising central-local relations in Deng's China: Decentralization, dilemmas of control, and diluted effects of reform". in B.J. Dickson and C.M. Chao. (eds.) (2001) *Remaking the Chinese State: Strategies, Society, and Security*. Routledge: London, England.,p.9.

⁴⁶⁰ Chao, C.M. and Dickson, B.J. "Remaking the Chinese state" In B.J. Dickson and C.M. Chao.(eds) (2001) *Remaking the Chinese State: Strategies, Society, and Security*. Routledge: London, England,p.9.

⁴⁶¹ Yang, D.P. (2005) "China's Education in 2003: From Growth to Reform". *Chinese Education and Society*. Vol. 38, No.4, pp19-20.

Education Department Research Centre, the following was found:

- 37.8 per cent of rural schools in the western region had a lack of sufficient desks
- 22.3 per cent of rural schools in the western region had unsafe classrooms or offices
- 32.5 per cent did not have sufficient funds for buying teaching supplies ⁴⁶²

While Kennedy highlights the negative impact of the elimination of the rural agricultural tax (bear in mind that the agricultural tax was one of the most important sources of revenue for the town and village governments)⁴⁶³ on the already low salary of rural teachers,⁴⁶⁴ Yang draws attention to the exodus of village teachers to medium-sized cities where income and livelihood for them were improved.⁴⁶⁵ This move of teachers led to the hiring of village substitute teachers who were required to lecture multiple classes and whose level of knowledge was often not of the required standard. It is hence not a surprise to observe the gradual deterioration of the quality

⁴⁶² Ibid., p.20.

⁴⁶³ Kojima, R. "China's High Economic Growth and the Emergence of Structural Contradictions" in N. Islam. (ed) (2009) *Resurgent China: Issues for the Future*. Palgrave: Hampshire, England.,p.115.

⁴⁶⁴ Kennedy, J.J. (2007) "From the Tax-for-Fee Reform to the Abolition of Agricultural Taxes: The Impact on Township Government in North-West China". in *The China Quarterly*. Vol.189 (March), pp.43-59

⁴⁶⁵ Yang, D.P. (2005) "China's Education in 2003: From Growth to Reform". in *Chinese Education and Society*, Vol.38 (4) , p.20.

of education in rural areas, especially the most depopulated villages.⁴⁶⁶

To formulate a solution to this matter, the State Council decided to shift the responsibility for rural compulsory education to the county-level administration, including the responsibility for the payment of teachers' salaries. However, the reality was that many county-level administrations were in budget deficit. Tian highlights, by citing the studies of Xue and Wang, that approximately 32 per cent of county-level administration ran deficit budgets in 1998 and the figure ran up to approximately 35 per cent in 1999.⁴⁶⁷ By early 2004 almost 40 per cent of all the counties and county-level cities continued to encounter financial tensions.⁴⁶⁸ Insufficient government funding for education continued to be a source of the problem. In 2004, only 2.79 per cent of the GDP was allocated for education expenditure which still fell behind the goal of 4 per cent set for the end of the 20th century.

Yang has reported that government financial support accounted for around 53

⁴⁶⁶ Many villages became depopulated as a result of Deng's strategy to firstly develop the coastal regions; many people of improvised areas left their home village and worked as migrant workers in the coastal industrial regions.

⁴⁶⁷ Tian, J.Q. "Challenge, governance reform and disharmony in rural society" in R. Sanders & Y. Chen. (eds.) (2007) *China's Post-Reform Economy—Achieving Harmony, Sustaining Growth*. Routledge: Abingdon, Oxon., p.53.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

per cent of total educational expenditure while the remaining 47 per cent came from the pockets of families and private institutions.⁴⁶⁹ The findings of Peng *et al* have revealed that only 23 per cent of the limited government funding was allocated to rural areas where about 60 per cent of the population resided.⁴⁷⁰ At household level, education expenditure has become a heavy burden for the peasants. The study cited by Gao and Zhang has revealed that around 33 per cent of their income went towards the education of their children.⁴⁷¹ Educational expenditure has become the single highest expenditure item for peasant households.⁴⁷² Much pressure is exerted on rural households whose marginalised lives have become increasingly problematic for the government.

6. 2 New Governing Discourses

The PRC has been in a mode of periodical, if not constant, change since its inception in 1949. Since the end of the 20th century, reform in the PRC has taken another turn. The extended emphasis on modernisation and economic growth has

⁴⁶⁹ Yang, D.P. (2005) "China's Education in 2003: From Growth to Reform". in *Chinese Education and Society*.38 (4) (July/August), p.37.

⁴⁷⁰ Peng,G., Dai, H., Liu, X., Zhu, S. and Feng, X. (2006) "An Open Letter by Five Veteran Educators Appealing for Fairness in Education". Reprinted in D.P. Yang "Pursuing Harmony and Fairness in Education". in *Chinese Education and Society*. Vol.39, No.6 (November/December),p.49-56.

⁴⁷¹ Gao, Y. and Zhang, R. (2006) "1998-2002 Wuoguoqaoxiaoxuezafeicengzhang 5.34 bei" [Cost of Higher Education Rose 5.34 Times] Article dated July 11, 2006. Online. Available <http://edu.people.com.cn/GB/8216/4580454.html> (accessed on July 7, 2010).

⁴⁷² Yang, D.P. (2005) "China's Education in 2003: From Growth to Reform". in *Chinese Education and Society*, 38 (4) (July/August), p.19-20.

been questioned, and the economism within the state developmental discourse challenged. The PRC's increasing social and geographic inequity, paired with increasing expectations from the masses, has generated a momentum for massive social disturbance and political volatility.⁴⁷³ The CCP leadership has reached a new consensus that the prevalent model of "economy-first" development, the "truth" of Deng's time is reaching its peak. There is a need to strengthen the political legitimacy of the party-state via innovative ideas and policies fit for the current Chinese circumstances.

The CCP, the "ideological state apparatus", assuming its specific function in formulating dominant discourse(s) and managing ideological relations, has revitalised humanism as the centre of their political and social concepts within Chinese Marxism. While the third generation of leaders headed by Jiang Zemin hold economism to its climax, they have started to pave the way for another stage of advancement. Quite obviously, the leadership is responsible for defining what is considered as true by employing skills and processes that confer value on the acquisition of truth. Hu Jintao, seeing the disadvantages of a biased economism, is

⁴⁷³ Wu, G. and Landdowne, H. (eds.) (2009) *Socialist China, Capital China: Social tension and political adaptation under economic globalisation*. Routledge: Abingdon, Oxon.

more than eager to brainstorm new dimensions of theoretical break-through in order to safeguard his role in history. Since 2002 the leadership has tried to maximise coverage in the media headlines by creating one new concept after another. A new set of political concepts and values has been watchfully crafted out and, for the purpose of strong impact on the masses, reiterated through state-managed media and official speeches. By integrating traditional Chinese political concepts with core ideas of Marxism, a new round of ideological concepts in the names of “Scientific Outlook on Development” and “Building Harmonious Society” has been formulated. This new set of concepts stresses i) sustainability through the balance between humanity and nature, ii) equity through narrowing the gap between the wealthy and the poor and iii) building a harmonious society through equalising economic and social development.⁴⁷⁴ These are centred on a balanced approach between economic growth and social justice. Under these concepts, all social infrastructures, including laws, public policies, institutions and operational codes are to be established for the common good of humanity. A new set of concepts that embraces the discourse of “putting people first” (*yi-ren-wei-ben* 以人為本) is made possible by formulating a new public consensus through the borrowing from political wisdoms of ancient

⁴⁷⁴ Chen, T. (2006) *Harmoniousness of meaning, politic and benefit in China's social construction*. School of the Central Party Publishing: Beijing, PRC. [This is in Chinese: 陈天林. 中国社会建设中的意义和谐、政治和谐与利益和谐 北京市：中共中央党校出版社，2006.]

China.⁴⁷⁵ In the process, Hu attempts to further elaborate and capitalise on Deng's idea that the ultimate essence of socialist appeal lay in the prosperity of all people, not just a few.⁴⁷⁶ This is the part of Deng's ideas often missed or omitted by many, intentionally or unintentionally. The ability to secure socialist ideas within Marxist tenets is key to Hu's legitimacy. He knows only too well that, for socialists, equity is a fundamental value.

6.3 “Three Represents”: Antecedent of Harmonism

Jiang's theory of “Three Represents” signifies the significant role of the CCP. This theory centres on the CCP as representing i) the development trend of advanced productive forces, ii) the orientation of advanced culture, and iii) the fundamental interest of the overwhelming majority of the people of China. Despite being vague and somewhat ambiguous it is decreed as the official ideology of the third generation leadership. While Jiang works on the theory of “Three Represents”, he also initiates the idea of socialist harmonious society which first came onto the scene of the CCP

⁴⁷⁵ In September 2001, the CCP proposed a new concept termed “yi-ren-wei-ben” (literally means “putting people first”) in a document advocating strengthening people's character build up with reference to traditional Chinese culture and ethics. The document is titled: “Implementation Outline for Building Public Ethic” dated 24th Oct, 2001. The concept was officially endorsed by the CCP in 2003.

⁴⁷⁶ Deng, Xiaoping (1993) “The Reform of The System For Managing Science and Technology Is Designed to Liberate the Productive Forces” and “Unity Depends On Ideals and Discipline” in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping Vol.3*. People's Publishing House: Beijing, PRC., pp. 113-115 and 116-118.

at the beginning of the 21st century.⁴⁷⁷ There are always two sides of the coin. The theory of unity of opposites in Communist Chinese dialectics always attempts to start from the “whole”, totality, and hence is able to reveal the other side of the situation. The highlighting of harmonism is indeed a reflection of the existence of disharmony in the PRC as evidenced by the emergence of mass protest, ethnic unrest and rural discontent.⁴⁷⁸

The idealism under Mao before Deng’s economic reform demanded the masses to sacrifice their self-interests for the benefit of serving national interests.⁴⁷⁹ This ideological direction during Mao’s time produced a relatively egalitarian society in which economic and social inequity had been considerably reduced as a result of collective property ownership and the creation of a proletarian state. However, the simultaneous push for “class struggle” and the movement of massive revolutionary campaigns created a negative impact on social harmony. Deng’s “black cat Vs white cat theory” to boost efficiency and the discourse of “allowing some people to get rich first” have generated a common consensus that places spear-headed economic

⁴⁷⁷ In a political report in the 16th National Congress of 2002, Jiang Zemin’s talked of “social harmony” and set it as one of the major objectives of “building a well-off society”.

⁴⁷⁸ See Shirk, S. (2007) *China: Fragile Superpower*. Oxford University Press: New York, N.Y., pp.35-61.

⁴⁷⁹ Richard Solomon offers details on this point. See Soloman, R. (1971) *Mao’s Revolution And The Chinese Political Culture*. University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA.

growth and material possession above orthodox communism.

Two major pitfalls came about as a result of this. Firstly, the complexity of people's demands was reduced to the simple material needs of water, food, shelter and wealth accumulation. Secondly, equality of people became unimportant; disparity became an accepted reality. As Marx has opined, the greatest price people have to pay for capitalistic production is alienation, that is, people are not able to be in harmony with their fellow beings and with society.⁴⁸⁰ Exploitation, social antagonism and conflict began to accumulate in the PRC.

6.4 Ideology and Legitimacy

Moving into the 21st century, ideology continues to be a decisive tool in the ruling of the PRC. Like his predecessors, Hu Jintao is a leader who conceives the mastering of ideology in the name of "truth" to be a critical element of the CCP's leadership. This can be viewed from the perspective that "the exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information."⁴⁸¹ Hu explicitly stresses the importance of ideology in securing

⁴⁸⁰ Machan, T. (2006) *Revisiting Marxism: A Bourgeois Reassessment*. Hamilton Books: Lanham, Maryland., p.71.

⁴⁸¹ Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*. ed. Colin Gordon,

legitimacy for the CCP in his speech of 2004 on “Completing The Various Tasks of the Party and the State” (做好当前党和国家的各项工作):

“The ideological realm is historically an important battlefield the enemy and ourselves tried fiercely to seize. If this battlefield is in trouble, it will lead to social turbulence or even the loss of reigning power. To disturb a society, or to subvert a ruling power, opposing enemies will normally start from finding a point of break-through in ideology, firstly to confuse people’s thoughts.”⁴⁸²

The loss of ruling power is fatal. Ideology for Hu is a life or death issue. Legitimacy is critical since it provides validity for the authority and assures political survival. Hu’s aim is to consolidate the leading role of Marxism in the ideological realm and to continue the research and development of Marxist theory and socialist construction in China. By its very nature, the knowledge, the truth embodied in the ideology is, and has to be, oriented towards a particular political, social and economic circumstance. There is an integration of truth, knowledge and power.⁴⁸³ Situated before him is a task of social, economic and political engineering which requires him to study and answer critical theoretical and practical questions, to

trans. Colin Gordon *et al* . The Harvester: Sussex, U.K., p.51.

⁴⁸² This is a translation of the writer of this thesis. Original article in Chinese is from: 胡锦涛“做好当前党和国家的各项工作” 十六大以来重要文献选编. 中共中央文献研究室编 (北京: 中央文献出版社), p.318. [Hu, Jintao (2004) “To Perform the Best on Various Tasks for the Party and the State” in *Selected Important Documents Since the 16th Congress*.(edited by Chinese Communist Central Document Research Institute) Central Document Publishing: Beijing, PRC., p.318.]

⁴⁸³ Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*. ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon *et al* . The Harvester: Sussex, U.K., p.52.

transform the latest outcome of the development of Chinese Marxism into contemporary social and political concepts and to enhance the team-building of the CCP members. His attempt to draw up an ideological framework that would provide a conceptual social, political and economic blueprint is to allow decisions for action. This blueprint and decisions for action are configured and formatted in a way easily understood by the general public and communist comrades—they have to be understood by the amateur as well as by the politicians. Hu’s interpretation of the contemporary form and content of Marxism is to ensure “what there is about Marxism that one needs to understand, so that its appeal may be appreciated”.⁴⁸⁴ In a nutshell, the task is to package the ideology in knowledge and a “truth” that appeals to the CCP and the general public so that it is possible to exercise power.⁴⁸⁵

6. 5 Hu Jintao’s Ideological Dialectics: A Path towards Harmonism

The party is desperate for a new “truth” for its continuity. This time local traditional Chinese political concepts provide a new dimension for the advancement of Chinese Marxism. Conscious efforts are made to solicit new ideas and recommendations, not just with the CCP but also among Chinese scholars and elites.

⁴⁸⁴ Machan, T. (2006) *Revisiting Marxism: A Bourgeois Reassessment*. Hamilton Books: Lanham, Maryland., p.4.

⁴⁸⁵ Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*. ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon et al . The Harvester: Sussex, U.K., p.52.

Before long the discourses of “Scientific Outlook on Development” (*ke-xue-fa-zhan-guan*, 科学发展观) and “harmonious society” (*he-xie-she-hui*, 和谐社会) were pronounced by Hu Jintao. Ideologically these may be termed as scientific developmentalism and harmonism. To enhance the status and effectiveness of these ideological discourses, they were officially codified as the new guiding principles of the party, in line with Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiao Theory and the Theory of Three Represents at the 17th National Congress of 2007.⁴⁸⁶

Hu’s use of the term “scientific view on development” carries political implications. Firstly, “science” is considered as a body of truths. Truths are to be believed in, not to be doubted. Truths are also a reflection of reality, a reality that the CCP and the general public have to face. This serves to provide a justification for the measures of the party. The Marxist notion of “science” however is unique because it differs from the common understanding of scientific practice in an elemental way. According to common understanding, “science” is considered to be associated with the discovery of laws of lasting truths. The Marxist notion of “science”, however, is associated with the assumption of historical specificity. As Allman has indicated, for

⁴⁸⁶ Guo, B. (2010) *China’s Quest For Political Legitimacy: The New Equity-Enhancing Politics*. Lexington Books: Lanham, Maryland., p.27.

Marx “any truth discovered is.....historically specific”⁴⁸⁷ because “Marx’s science is historically specific to capitalism and will be of only historical interest once capitalism is abolished.”⁴⁸⁸

At the same time, due consideration is given to the interpretation of the Chinese discourse of “science” in her modernisation process. Starting from the initial stage of the Chinese modernisation process, “science” has carried the notion of advancement and prosperity—a notion that is critical to the strengthening of China in the global arena. It is one that appeals to the Chinese masses. The highlighting of “science” is significant in Hu’s discourse because Marx maintains the scientific nature of his theory and that “to rest one’s confidence on science, on the laws of nature...will drive the working class toward its deserved salvation”.⁴⁸⁹ The scientific nature of Marxism provides the notion of assurance in reaching the ultimate stage of communism which is “the last and most mature stage of humanity’s development through history”.⁴⁹⁰ Hu maintains that his ideas are part of the theoretical advancement of Marxism so that he is able to move people, to elevate their

⁴⁸⁷ Allman, P. (2007) *On Marx: An Introduction to the Revolutionary Intellect of Karl Marx*. Sense Publisher: Rotterdam, The Netherlands., p.6.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., p.7.

⁴⁸⁹ Machan, T. (2006) *Revisiting Marxism: A Bourgeois Reassessment*. Hamilton Books: Lanham, Maryland., p.6.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., p.5.

consciousness and to organise them to actions.

Although Marxists take a critical stance against capitalism, Marxism maintains that the wealth generated by advanced productivity will provide people with material abundance under socialism and communism, allowing people “experience of tranquillity and happiness”.⁴⁹¹ The maturity of humanity, under Marx’s theory, is “a vision of humanity’s collective development, its harmonious future!”⁴⁹² This is a vision that has to be managed so as to maintain, and indeed to strengthen, its appeal to people who search for liberation from adversity. In addition to the efficiency and practicality associated with this vision, its role in providing a better alternative to the existing social and moral standard of the people is also decisive. Without a solid social and moral supremacy, the theoretical argument will be downgraded and eventually fail the actual political battle.

Harmony is taken as an ideological core and value orientation by Hu to represent a political integration of beliefs, ideas, concepts, values and social norms as well as a tool and, at the same time, a target for governing by the state. Harmonism is

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., p.79.

⁴⁹² Ibid.

pluralistic in nature in that it includes tolerance, broad-mindedness and universality with a central ideal of seeking mutual benefits for all. Under a strong current of capitalist globalisation phenomenon and a weakening momentum of globalising Marxist ideology at the beginning of the 21st century, Hu's team is required to ensure that the guiding ideology, the "truth", readily appeals to the masses. It must have a foundation rooted in traditional Chinese culture and simultaneously allow a platform of openness for absorbing the other-ness of the world in the wave of globalisation, in the national interests of the PRC.

Harmonism is perceived as a considerably different approach to modernisation and economism and an attempt to publicise the worldview of China to the globe as well as building a "model for the world".⁴⁹³ This re-configured discourse is one with a new value orientation, proclaiming to the world that decades of a determined search for modernisation and economic advancement are to be further advanced to another level of socialism. It is an ideological construction of another level of Chinese Marxism that makes sense to the Chinese masses and the CCP as well as to the world. In structuring it with appealing political concepts and components

⁴⁹³ Qin, Xiaoying (2006) "Harmonious Society to Be a Model for the World" in *China Daily*. 13thOct, 2006.

including justice, equity, democracy and fraternity, Hu attempts to generate a perception that it is viable, workable and achievable. When Hu puts forward this utopian goal, the CCP will need to rely on ideology and propaganda to mobilise the masses to fulfill the party's agenda.

The ideological dialectics of Hu has allowed the regime to advance more towards the core beliefs of Marxism with adaptive elements to fit in with the local situation of China. This may, perhaps, be termed as a localised "truth". Hu highlights that the PRC is capable of self-creativity according to China's national circumstance (*guo-qing*, 国情) while actively making use of the experience of foreign countries. China insists it wants to run a peaceful race on development and affirms the desire to exist peacefully with friendly countries under the five principles of peaceful co-existence,⁴⁹⁴ based on the foundation of mutual benefit, to develop active exchanges and co-operation and contribute diligently to the peace and development of the whole human race. In an occasion of global affairs, Hu also calls for the close union of all nations, taking together the opportunity and facing together the challenges of developing a bright future for the human race, truly building up a

⁴⁹⁴ The five principles include: mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful co-existence.

sustainable peaceful “harmonious world” with mutual prosperity.⁴⁹⁵ This is in line with the Marxist view of material abundance and “its harmonious future”.⁴⁹⁶ In other words, Hu’s concept of “harmony” is an ideological dialectics of the “globalising” effort of maintaining peace and security of the world and the development of mutual benefits for all nations while at the same time stressing the “local” demand of addressing the value of cultural diversity and the respect needed for the choices of independence of individual nations; resulting in the proclamation of a “harmonious world”.

The discourses of scientific developmentalism and harmonism are blended as a set of political concepts created to mediate rather than to suppress, emerging social problems. It comes along with the projected features of traditional Chinese *xiao-kang* (小康) society,⁴⁹⁷ while attempting to produce synergetic effects along the discourses of the classical Marxist line. By doing so, Hu affirms the view of Marx that Marxist “beliefs are supposedly in constant flux”⁴⁹⁸ and are “in line with the dialectical

⁴⁹⁵ A speech delivered by Hu Jintao to the United Nations Summit in New York on 15th Sept, 2005. http://english.gov.cn/2005-09/16/content_64126.htm (accessed on 18th May, 2011).

⁴⁹⁶ Machan, T. (2006) *Revisiting Marxism: A Bourgeois Reassessment*. Hamilton Books: Lanham, Maryland., p.79.

⁴⁹⁷ There is basically no direct equivalent of *xiao-kang* society in the western terms. Literally, it can be translated as a “moderately healthy society”. It is stable, citizens have reasonable jobs, incomes to enjoy a comfortable life. The government governs the state via measures of humanity.

⁴⁹⁸ Machan, T. (2006) *Revisiting Marxism: A Bourgeois Reassessment*. Hamilton Books: Lanham, Maryland., p.47.

principles of either nature or at least human thought.”⁴⁹⁹ Marxist positions must transform with time. To begin with, Hu advocates his humanism by working hard to establish a leadership concerned with the welfare of those who have been left behind by the swift economic development of the state. His ideological discourse steers the state towards an organised, comprehensive and sustainable development. It also represents a continuation of the fundamental pursuit of the CCP since the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949. Here one has to keep in mind that Marxist ideas and concepts would not have gained momentum in China since the beginning of the 20th century had they been totally unfavourable. Marx’s vision of the ultimate, good human society is “an utopia that aims at the political realisation of some noble objectives”.⁵⁰⁰ It contains a set of “many desirable ideals” which, in Machan’s wordings, include “what one likes, getting along with everyone,, not leaving anyone to miss out on the progress human beings have made in life”.⁵⁰¹ Harmony and equity, as integral elements of the ultimate goal in the Marxist worldview,⁵⁰² appeal and dovetail with the Chinese traditional worldview of *da-tong*(大同) which is the Chinese ideal of a great harmonious society. Literally, the concept of *da-tong* can be translated as “the great harmonious together-ness” (more

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., p.26.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., p.26.

⁵⁰² Ibid., p.79.

elaboration will be given in the next section). Hu is aware that if he and the CCP defend socialism as a better alternative to global capitalism for its material achievement, economic growth and efficiency, but without a visionary worldview that bears affinity to the Chinese, then they would soon weaken the appeal and eventually not being able to substantiate their political power.

China as the “local” is “a site of promise”,⁵⁰³ a promise for a better future, for an advanced stage of humanity. The localised version of the Marxist view of harmony, in Hu’s depiction, is one reflected in a harmonious *xiao-kang* society which is a well-governed society in a period of tranquillity⁵⁰⁴ with six attributes:⁵⁰⁵

1. democratic rule of law (*min-zhu-fa-zhi*, 民主法治)
2. equity and justice (*gong-ping- zheng-yi*, 公平正义)
3. honesty and fraternity (*cheng-xin-yo-uai*, 诚心友爱)
4. “full of energy” (*chong-man- huo-li*, 充满活力)
5. a stable orderliness (*an-ding- you-xu* 安定有序)

⁵⁰³ The concept of “local as site of promise” is important in the understanding of “localisation”. See Dirlik, A. (1997) *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism*. Western Press: Boulder, Colorado., p.85.

⁵⁰⁴ The concept of the Marxist meaning of tranquillity is revealed in Machan’s work. According to him, “For eventually it is capitalism’s generation of wealth that will all socialism and communism to give people an abundant experience of tranquillity and happiness.” See Machan, T. (2006) *Revisiting Marxism: A Bourgeois Reassessment*. Hamilton Books: Lanham, Maryland., p.79.

⁵⁰⁵ Chen, J. (2007) *On Harmony*. Heilongjiang Education Publishing: Ha’erbin, PRC., p.89. [陈金松编著. 和谐论. 哈尔滨市：黑龙江教育出版社, 2007., p. 89]

6. harmony between people and the environment

(*ren-he-zi-ran-he-xiexiang-chu* 人和自然和谐相处)

Discourses undergo “constant change as new utterances (*enounces*) are added to it”.⁵⁰⁶ For Hu and his party, the discourse of harmony is not only Marxist but also simultaneously Chinese in nature. It is part of the unity of Marxist-ness and Chinese-ness. When the two perspectives are combined, synergy is expected. Arguably, interpretation of an ideology is often connected with “a particular temporal manifestation of an ideology”.⁵⁰⁷ Hu’s ideological innovation leads him to search for a linkage with traditional Chinese political theories which are mainly associated with and articulated by four concepts: *tian-ming* (appointment of heaven or mandate of heaven, 天命), *ren-zheng* (humanised governance, 仁政), *yi-min-wei--ben* (people as the basis or people comes first, 以民为本), and *tian-xia-wei-gong* (global unity, 天下为公). The amalgamation of these concepts with Marxist discourses since the beginning of the twenty-first century has produced a significant impact on ideological development in the PRC.

⁵⁰⁶ Foucault, M. (1991) “Politics and the Study of Discourse”. in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality with two lectures by and interview with Michel Foucault*. ed. G. Burchell *et al*, Harvester Wheatsheaf: London, U.K., p.54.

⁵⁰⁷ Freedon, M. (1996) *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, U.K., p.115.

6.6 Traditional Chinese Political Concepts

In common with many other early civilisations, ancient Chinese political concepts are interwoven with religious beliefs. From the fundamental concept that heaven gives birth to people, the ancient Chinese begin to construct their political conceptions. It is in accordance with the will of Heaven that a ruler is needed; otherwise the regime will descend into chaos. The concept of *tian-ming* (appointment of heaven or mandate of heaven, 天命) maintains the notion that the legitimate governing power of the ruler originates from the divine, the supernatural force. Rulers are said to receive special gifts from Heaven both in virtue and in talent. Their role is a divine appointment.⁵⁰⁸ Since the ruler is a divine choice, it is not for the subjects to select but to obey. Hu, who declares himself to be an atheist, a follower of scientific Marxism and a promoter of Marxist democracy, rejects this concept being included as one of the essential building blocks in his contemporary ideology.

The concept of *ren-zheng* (humanised governance, 仁政) is an integral part of Confucianism. *Ren* (仁) may be translated into benevolence, goodness or virtue;⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁸ Waltham, C. (1971) *Shu Ching: Book of History. A modernized edition of the translation of James Legge*. Henry Regnery Company: Chicago, Illinois., p.147-148. According to the *Book of History*, traditional Chinese political concepts maintain heaven creates people with desires, without a ruler people would fall into disorder.

⁵⁰⁹ Hsiao, K. (1979) *A History of Chinese Political Thought*. trans. F. Mote. Princeton University Press: Princeton, N.J., pp.101-102.

but in the discussion on the relationship with contemporary Chinese Marxist theories, a translation into “humanity” or “humanised” is preferred here. It is the basis of Confucius’s discussion on government or politics. Having a divine appointment does not mean the ruler can exercise absolute authoritarianism. Confucianism maintains that the appropriate measurement of the success of the ruler is not power, but the ruler’s benevolence (virtue) and the gratification of the people because in the eyes of Confucius, social and political interactions are in fact “an arena for the manifestation of benevolent (*ren*) conduct”.⁵¹⁰ In the Confucian depiction, the ideal society of great together-ness (*da-tong*) is one in which the ruler is characterised by his benevolence towards the people. As a result, the ideal regime is one which has social unity and security with the absence of divisive conflict. It is a society in which harmony prevails.

Literally, the concept of *yi-min-wei-ben* (people as the basis or putting people first, 以民为本) can be translated as “to regard people as the origin, or the centre, of the state”. A people-centred government works on the support of the people and governs for the well-being of the people. This is inter-linked with the concept of “humanised governance” (*ren-zheng*) in the sense that the primary role of the ruler is

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., p.102.

to govern for the people and to take care of their interests. It is a concept that teaches the ruler to seek legitimacy from the people by winning their hearts and minds through virtuous and benevolent acts.⁵¹¹

The concept of *tian-xia-wei-gong* (global unity, 天下为公) projects the notion that the state belongs to the people collectively and that public interests are more important than the interests of the ruler. Literally, *tian-xia-wei-gong* can be translated as “global public ownership” or “global unity” and incorporates the discourses of equity, social justice and great together-ness with harmony (*da-tong*, 大同). When *da-tong* is achieved, the social system is governed by a public and common spirit for the formulation and execution of every policy under Heaven; people of talent, virtue and ability are selected for the government, sincerity is accentuated and harmonious relationships among people and with nature are nurtured.⁵¹²

The concept of equity is deeply embraced in traditional Chinese political thoughts and endeavours. China has been one of the most populous countries in the

⁵¹¹ See Mencius, Book IV Part A: 9 (2003) *Mencius: Revised Edition*. trans. D.C. Lau The Chinese University Press: Hong Kong., p.159. (After Confucius, Mencius is second in importance in the development of Confucianism).

⁵¹² Hsiao, K. (1979) *A History of Chinese Political Thought*. trans. F. Mote. Princeton University Press: Princeton, N.J., p.125.

world. Periodic problems of famine and the lack of arable land have often caused scarcity of resources for daily living. It has been the common understanding of the Chinese that justice carries the notion of fair distribution of economic resources to the people. Confucian advisors to the ruler have often pointed out that uneven distribution is more perilous than the lack of resources. An ideal society is one in which the status of those working with their minds and those working physically are the same, their contributions are equally recognised. Although they have different functions to perform, there is no distinction between the ruler and the ruled.⁵¹³

Political theories of China from ancient times have regarded politics as an extension of morality.⁵¹⁴ The ideal society of Great Together-ness (*da-tong*) is depicted as one in which everyone has high morals, with the ruler being the most virtuous. It is one that advances a multi-faceted state embracing people of different abilities, capacities and moral visions. This multiplicity and order of society sustains harmonious relationships through a co-ordinated ethic-social setting of rigorous self-discipline of individuals.⁵¹⁵ In it, the pursuit of moral character and the seeking

⁵¹³ Mencius. Book III Part A: 4(2003) *Mencius: Revised Edition*. trans. D.C. Lau The Chinese University Press: Hong Kong., p.115.

⁵¹⁴ Tang, Z. and Zue, B. (1996) *Maoism and Chinese Culture*. Nova Science Publishers: New York, N.Y., p.94.

⁵¹⁵ See *Confucius Analects: with selections from traditional commentaries*. trans. Edward Slingerland. Hackett Publishing: Ithaca, IN.. (Especially Analects 1:2, 1:4, 15:40, 16:9 and 17:2).

of justice are above material advancement. “Men of noble character value justice, while petty men stress profit”, Confucius proclaims.⁵¹⁶

6.7 Dialectical linkage of Marxist and Chinese Political Concepts

There is “an autonomous discursive formation” that “define[s] the set of relations which define and situate” the new discourse “among other types of discourse”.⁵¹⁷ Confucius has advocated the discourse of harmonism in China in many of his writings since ancient times. In the context of contemporary China, the attributes of Hu’s discourses have been articulated in Confucius’ writings as the essential elements of a well-managed *xiao-kang* society, which in the Chinese sense of dialectical progress would ultimately achieve the state of *da-tong* (the great harmonious together-ness). In the classical Marxist disposition, but using traditional Chinese Confucian terminology, the ideological goal to reach a *da-tong* society in China and ultimately for the whole world—the stage of global communism is manifested through a well-governed local *xiao-kang* society. Hu knows too well that, paradoxically, “Marx never bothered to say a whole lot about communism”.⁵¹⁸ What

⁵¹⁶ As quoted in Tang, Z. and Zue, B. (1996) *Maoism and Chinese Culture*. Nova Science Publishers: New York, N.Y., p.97.

⁵¹⁷ Foucault, M. (1991) “Politics and the Study of Discourse” in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality with two lectures by and interview with Michel Foucault*. ed. G. Burchell et al, Harvester Wheatsheaf: London, U.K., p.54.

⁵¹⁸ Machan, T. (2006) *Revisiting Marxism: A Bourgeois Reassessment*. Hamilton Books: Lanham, Maryland., p.158.

Marx has depicted is merely that “it is the mature form humanity will finally take”.⁵¹⁹

What has been hinted at is the end of alienation when the mature stage is reached.⁵²⁰

Emancipated free individuals of the masses, under communism, will be able to reside harmoniously when the stage of “from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs” is reached.⁵²¹ This has left Hu much space for his dialectical endeavour in China as “a site of invention and construction” in the twenty-first century.⁵²²

For the formation of a discourse, there is “the existence of a set of rules of formation for *all* its objects,.....*all* its operations,.....*all* its concepts,.....*all* its theoretical options”.⁵²³ The politics of Communist China have taught Hu not to take credit for himself but that he must build his foundation of legitimacy on the theories of Marx and the ideologies of his CCP predecessors. In the 17th CCP Congress of 2007, Hu intelligently relates the progress of the CCP to the contributions of Mao, Deng and Jiang.⁵²⁴ With a foundation built on Mao, Deng and Jiang, Hu reaffirms

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., p.159.

⁵²⁰ Ibid., p.74.

⁵²¹ Marx, K. (1977) in McLellan, D. (ed.) *Karl Marx Selected Writings*. Oxford University Press: New York, N.Y., p.569.

⁵²² Dirlik, A. (1997) *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism*. Westview Press: Boulder, Colorado., p.102.

⁵²³ Foucault, M. (1991) “Politics and the Study of Discourse” in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality with two lectures by and interview with Michel Foucault*. ed. G. Burchell *et al*, Harvester Wheatsheaf: London, U.K., p.54.

⁵²⁴ Hu, Jintao “Report at the 17th Party Congress” of 15th October, 2007.

the political ontology of the CCP and the continuity of progress to another new era. He understands the need to wrestle with the conflicting objectives of social and political policies that must be in line with Marxist-Leninist objectives and the immediate pragmatic mission of economic advancement and productivity. Having learned from the approaches of his predecessors, Hu contends to set immediate goals for the government administration that align with the progressive target of reaching the higher level of a *xiao-kang* society set out by Deng.⁵²⁵ In other words, it is socialism, as the antecedent of communism, a stage in which every individual of the masses is able to participate and enjoy a higher quality of life within the context that there is a democratic system, fulfilment of the rights of the individual, equalisation of the differences among different parts of the state, the existence of a more reasonable income distribution and allocation of public resources and an improved standard of living for every household.

With his ideological dialectics as the backbone, Hu maintains that in order to reach these goals there is a need to make dialectical modifications, that is, resolving

http://www.gov.cn/english/2007-10/24/content_785505.htm (accessed on 15th May 2011).

⁵²⁵ Deng from time to time had reiterated the goal of decades of fighting is poverty eradication and the achievement of *xiao-kang* by the end of the 20th century. Source: Deng, Xiaoping. "To uphold Socialism We Must Eliminate Poverty" dated April 26, 1987" in Deng, Xiaoping. (1994) *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping Vol. III (1982-1992)*. Foreign Languages Press: Beijing, PRC., pp.221-223. And Wang, G. and Wong, J. (1998) *China's Political Economy*. World Scientific Publishing and Singapore University Press: Singapore.

contradictions so as to retain progress. The discourse of harmonism hence has been enlarged into a holistic idea to be connected, in one way or the other, with every challenge facing the PRC. In other words, the discourse of harmonism is defined and situated within a set of other discourses. It becomes a dialectical whole including *he-ping* (peace, 和平), as expressed in the discourse of a world peace; *he-jie* (reconciliation, 和解), as expressed in the peaceful reconciliation with Taiwan, ROC, and *he-xie* (harmony, 和谐), as expressed in the harmonised Chinese *xiao-kang* society. The outcome of this hermeneutical and dialectical exercise is not straightforward, but involves a “painstaking exploration”⁵²⁶ of the process of “socialist revolution and construction.”⁵²⁷ It is also part of a grand plan to achieve the ultimate goal of communism located locally in the PRC, as a “site of promise”,⁵²⁸ and eventually throughout the world on a global horizon.

Hu’s ideological discourse of “scientific outlook on development” becomes a means for amalgamating the works of Mao, Deng and Jiang in broadly Marxist terms.⁵²⁹ It does not come into the political scene all of a sudden but is “a

⁵²⁶ Hu, Jintao “Report at the 17th Party Congress” of 15th October, 2007. http://www.gov.cn/english/2007-10/24/content_785505.htm (accessed on 15th May 2011).

⁵²⁷ Ibid.

⁵²⁸ Dirlik, A. (1997) *The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism*. Westview Press: Boulder, Colorado., p.85.

⁵²⁹ Hu, Jintao “Report at the 17th Party Congress” dated 15th October, 2007. http://www.gov.cn/english/2007-10/24/content_785505.htm (accessed on 15th May, 2011).

continuation and development of the important thoughts on development advanced by the previous three generations of central collective leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and a concentrated expression of the Marxist world outlook and methodology with regard to development.”⁵³⁰ It is a continuation of the ideological dialectics of globalism and localism by Marx, Lenin, Mao, Deng and Jiang. Hence Hu continues by emphasising the scientific nature of his discourse: “It is a scientific theory that is in the same line as Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of Three Represents and keeps up with the times.”⁵³¹ Globally, it is “the Marxist world outlook”.⁵³² Locally, it is for the advancement of the CCP and the Chinese people since it is an “important guiding principle for China’s economic and social development and a major strategic thought that [China] must uphold and apply in developing socialism with Chinese characteristics.”⁵³³

What is the relationship between the discourse of “scientific outlook on development” and harmonism? For Hu, social harmony is an essential attribute of socialism with Chinese characteristics which is to be built up by applying the

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

⁵³¹ Ibid.

⁵³² Ibid.

⁵³³ Ibid.

discourse of “scientific outlook on development”. Social harmony comes hand in hand with scientific development. They are integral to each other. It is the historical mission of the CCP to establish a harmonious socialist society through the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It is through scientific development that the material wealth of the Chinese people will be improved while social equity and justice are assured. Hu’s ideological discourse reaches the centrality of Marxism and its core purposes which include democracy, rule of law, equity, justice, honesty, fraternity, vigour, vitality, stability, order, harmony between man and nature as well as the attainment of a harmonious society—“the mature form of humanity will finally take.”⁵³⁴

Compared with Deng’s ideological emphasis, it is not difficult to discover that Hu stands for equity and justice along with harmony while adhering to the Marxist core tenets. In Hu’s wording: “To realize social equity and justice is the Chinese Communists’ consistent position and a major task of developing socialism with Chinese characteristics”.⁵³⁵ This is the first time that the political concepts of social equity and justice have been so explicitly expressed since Mao and Deng. At the

⁵³⁴ Machan, T. (2006) *Revisiting Marxism: A Bourgeois Reassessment*. Hamilton Books: Lanham, Maryland., p.159.

⁵³⁵ Hu, Jintao “Report at the 17th Party Congress” of 15th October, 2007. http://www.gov.cn/english/2007-10/24/content_785505.htm (accessed on 15th May 2011).

same time, Chinese-ness is added to the Marxist global discourses of social equity and justice.

While attempts are made for an on-going theoretical innovation, ideological dialectics continues to provide the effort to “give [global] Marxism of contemporary China distinct characters of practice, of the Chinese nation and of the times.”⁵³⁶ The outcome is, a “Marxism of contemporary China.”⁵³⁷ Again, it is a global theory with a footing localised in China. This time, it is a contemporary China; not the semi-colonial or semi-feudal China of the early twentieth century when Marxism first entered China. This “Marxism of contemporary China” is one that promotes “a vigorous development and prosperity of social culture” with a “system of socialist core values” that “represents the essence of socialist ideology.”⁵³⁸ It is a dialectical task to “consolidate the guiding position of [global] Marxism” and to assure “the latest achievement in adapting [global] Marxism to [the local] Chinese conditions”⁵³⁹ so that the masses in China are inspired with a Chinese “common patriotism-centred national spirit and with the spirit of the times centring on reform and innovation,

⁵³⁶ Ibid.

⁵³⁷ Ibid..

⁵³⁸ Ibid..

⁵³⁹ Ibid.

guide social ethos with the socialist maxims of honour and disgrace.”⁵⁴⁰

Hu’s localisation of the Marxist ideal is achieved by anchoring Marxist concepts on to traditional Chinese discourses. He does that through a cultural discourse of re-construction shaped by a political framework. This necessitates a reassembling of concepts (new or existing) in such a way that they are linked to the prevalent structure of communication of the masses and guided by a type of hermeneutical frame that facilitates some pre-approved interpretations and discourages others.⁵⁴¹ Hermeneutical framing is not merely a language, it is about formulating a language that advocates a discourse of worldview.⁵⁴² By putting forward a grand and noble purpose—a harmonious society, a traditional Chinese *da-tong* worldview, Hu voices his intention of creating for the PRC a society in which contradictions and conflicts are minimised through the nurturing of a just and fair value spectrum. The objective of resolving social conflicts becomes obvious.

For Hu, a harmonious society is one in which democracy, equity, justice, rule of law, honour and fraternity prevail. It is a society that is stable, orderly and full of

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁴¹ Lakoff, G. (2004) *Don’t think of an elephant Know your values and frame the debate*. Chelsea Green Publishing: White River Junction, V.T., p.3.

⁵⁴² Ibid., p.4.

vitality. While Hu highlights the scientific nature of his discourse, his dialectics allows him to articulate the importance of the morality aspect of the discourse and its richness, as compared to Deng's modernism and economism. As Machan has pointed out, in managing human affairs, it is advisable to ensure the system and/or policy is "ultimately morally justified"⁵⁴³ and is "superior to those with which it stands in competition."⁵⁴⁴ For Chinese Marxism to be perceived as superior to global capitalism, as an advancement of Marx's theories and as the most appropriate theoretical basis for the progress of China, Hu maintains a combination of science and morality—indeed, Chinese morality. After all, politics is ultimately traced down to the activities of humanity, the worth of which lies in "being on the right side, not just of managing to be expedient and practical."⁵⁴⁵ It is an ideology that leads people to believe it is just because "[t]he kind of system one believes to be just, is vital to everyone."⁵⁴⁶ Figure 6.1 (of next page) shows the major political concepts of Hu's harmonism and scientific developmentalism. In the era of Hu, discourses of justice, honesty, equity, vitality, fraternity and sustainable economism become formational discourses in the body of the ideological engine of the CCP as depicted in Figure 6.1.

⁵⁴³ Machan, T. (2006) *Revisiting Marxism: A Bourgeois Reassessment*. Hamilton Books: Lanham, Maryland., p.8.

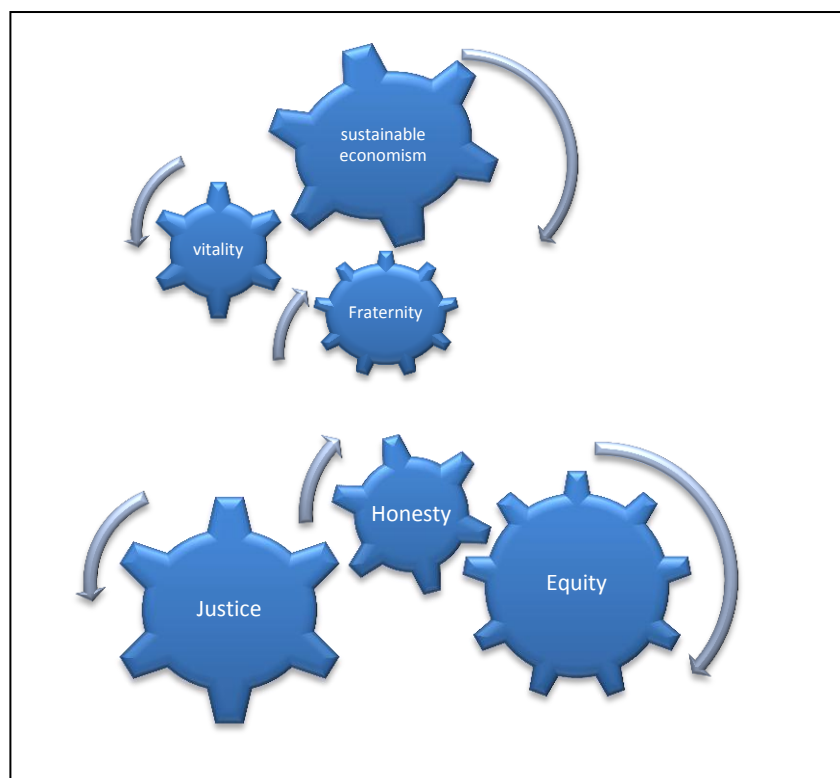
⁵⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁵ Machan, T. (2006) *Revisiting Marxism: A Bourgeois Reassessment*. Hamilton Books: Lanham, Maryland., p.8.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., p.8.

They are dynamically inter-related and can be symbolised as gears/cogs which are linked with each other. They become dominant and shape the foundational basis of Hu's scientific developmentalism and harmonism as specific ideological outcomes.

Figure 6.1 Scientific Developmentalism and Harmonism



6.8 Towards an Equity-strengthening Compulsory Education Policy

Material and social circumstance influence policy decisions.⁵⁴⁷ Ideology and its associated concepts are constructed “to deliver conceptual social maps and political

⁵⁴⁷ Gale, T. (1999) “Policy Trajectories: Treading the discourse path of policy analysis” in *Discourse: Studies in Cultural Politics of Education*. Vol. 20 Issue 3, Dec 1999, p. 398.

decisions.”⁵⁴⁸ Compulsory education at the primary stage of Chinese Socialism is a political endeavour, carrying ideological elements as revealed in various public policies, which can be seen as a set of master plans containing value, objective and strategy. As Ball’s concept informs the theoretical framework of this thesis, policy discourse “articulates and constrains the possibility and probabilities of interpretation and enactments.”⁵⁴⁹ The policy on compulsory education represents an authoritative allocation of social values and resources set by the CCP. It is one that involves the issue of social equity and justice as it is geared to the rights and obligations of the people and the state. Behind the allocation of resources for compulsory education is a whole set of unquantifiable political and value constraints. Policy does not merely carry its functional and technical elements but comes simultaneously with its value dimension, the origin and direction of which is a result of the prevalent ideology of the CCP. It directs the actions of the state.

For a compulsory education policy, which is over two decades old, a discrepancy has existed between the intention of the policy (which is a reflection of the ideology, the guiding principle) and the actual outcome. The document of 1985,

⁵⁴⁸ Freeden, M. (1996) *Ideologies and Political Theory*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, U.K., p.30.

⁵⁴⁹ Ball, S. (1994) “What is policy? Texts, trajectories and toolboxes” in *Education Reform: A Critical and Post-structural Approach*. Open University Press: Buckingham, England., p.23.

“the Decision on the Reform of Basic Education Systems Issued by the Central Party Committee”,⁵⁵⁰ paved the way for a law to universalise nine-year compulsory education step by step. In 1986, the “Law of Compulsory Education in the People’s Republic of China” was passed by the National People’s Congress, declaring that all children of six years of age were entitled to the right to receive nine years of compulsory basic education regardless of their gender, ethnicity, and race.⁵⁵¹ To pass a law is one thing, but to satisfactorily execute it is quite another matter. There is a common Chinese slogan: “Whenever there is a policy from above, there is a counter-strategy from below”. The law, without details of its execution, failed to become effective at all.

To enhance the outcome, another document titled, “Measures on Reinforcing the Law for Compulsory Education” was endorsed by the State Council in 1992 so as to stipulate details for its execution. However, the subsequent outcome was still far from satisfactory because of an increased rural-urban divide, inadequate educational funding from the county-based system and sub-standard educational quality. Since the beginning of the 21st century, the central government has put much greater effort

⁵⁵⁰ Zhang, X. (ed.) (2011) *China’s Education Development and Policy, 1978-2008*. Koninklijke Brill NV: Leiden, The Netherlands., p.118.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid.

into a key educational reform known as the “Two Basics”. The “Two Basics” plan, originally launched in the 1990s, aimed firstly to provide nine years of compulsory education to all school-age children and secondly to basically eliminate illiteracy among adults and youth between 15 and 45 years of age.⁵⁵² However, millions of school-age children were still unable to receive a full nine-year compulsory basic education even though the Chinese law had mandated this since 1986.⁵⁵³

The problem had been intensified to the extent that in 2005 Premier Wen Jiabao had identified it as “an outstanding problem” that was against the interests of the people and hampered progress towards a harmonious society.⁵⁵⁴ For the CCP and the central government, the inability to deliver basic compulsory education to reach rural children was one of the acute social problems,⁵⁵⁵ which endangered the position of the CCP as the legitimate ruling party. The incorporation of effective measures for basic compulsory education for rural children was declared by the central government to better serve the vital needs of the Chinese people and was, in

⁵⁵² Zhang, T. and Zhao, M. (2006) “Universalizing Nine-Year Compulsory Education For Poverty Reduction in Rural China” in *Review of Education*. Vol. 52, pp.261-286.

⁵⁵³ *Compulsory Education Law of the People's Republic of China*. (adopted at the fourth session of the Sixth National People's Congress on April 12, 1986, and effective as of July 1, 1986) (2004) Law Publishing: Beijing, PRC.

⁵⁵⁴ “Premier Wen stresses building of ‘harmonious society’” at the official Chinese government website— http://english.gov.cn/2005-03/05/content_20394.htm (accessed on 18th May, 2011).

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid.

accordance with the concept of “putting people first”,⁵⁵⁶ reiterated by Hu and his leadership team from time to time. The relationship of compulsory basic education is linked ideologically to the discourse of harmonism and the concept of “putting people first”.

In the years before 2005, for many underprivileged rural districts the compulsory education policy existed merely in name but was without substance. On the one hand, there was insufficient funding for effective execution. On the other hand, various fees were levied on students, adding an unnecessary burden to rural households.⁵⁵⁷ Education expenses, along with medical expenses, became unaffordable for impoverished rural households. In a new initiative, entitled “Two Exemptions and One Subsidy” (*liang-mian-yi-bu*),⁵⁵⁸ underprivileged rural students would receive free textbooks (exemption one) and were exempted from miscellaneous fees (exemption two). Those junior secondary students who had to board at school were allocated a monthly living subsidy (the subsidy) to cover their living expenses.⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁷ Yang, D.P. (2005) “China’s Education in 2003: From Growth to Reform”. *Chinese Education and Society*. 38. (4) (July/August).

⁵⁵⁸ Zhang, R. (2008) “Preliminary Legal Exploration of the ‘Two Exemptions and One Subsidy’ (TEOS Program)” in *Chinese Education and Society*. Vol. 1, No.1, pp.17-22.

⁵⁵⁹ Junior secondary schools are not available in every village of remote areas. Many of them would need to board at school site and only able to go home bi-weekly or monthly depending on the

The declaration of the central government in December of 2005 of a free nine-year compulsory education for all children of rural China signified a radical change in the history of education in China. This meant that rural children would be able to exercise their rights to receive free school tuition and have miscellaneous fees paid for six years of primary schooling and three years of junior secondary education starting from 2007. The new initiative was expected to smooth the progress of the execution of the “Two Basics” in underprivileged rural areas, as the substantial financial burden on those unfortunate households in remote areas would be eased.

By bringing rural compulsory education to the level of a prominent social problem,⁵⁶⁰ associating it with the concept of equity within the “people-centred” discourse of harmonism and in line with the ideological dialectical outcome of the leaders, the execution of free nine-year compulsory education in rural areas began to be supported by a new, rural compulsory education Assured Funding Mechanism.⁵⁶¹ This action, initiated as an outcome of an ideological shift, witnessed an unprecedented level of funding made available for rural compulsory education by the

distance of school from home.

⁵⁶⁰ “Premier Wen stresses building of ‘harmonious society’” at the official Chinese government website— http://english.gov.cn/2005-03/05/content_20394.htm (accessed on 18th May, 2011).

⁵⁶¹ Wang, R. (2008) “Reform of the Rural Compulsory Education Assured Funding Mechanism Policy Design Perspective” in *Chinese Education and Society*. Vol. 41, No.1, pp.9-16.

PRC government, especially for the remote western regions.⁵⁶²

Political concepts and ideologies have a role to play in constructing social reality.⁵⁶³ As an outcome of the pursuit of humanistic socialism highlighting social equity and justice, Premier Wen Jiabao's initiative became part of the master plan to build a harmonious society. It was an ice-breaking action for the over two decades old compulsory education policy. This could be interpreted as a re-evaluation of the political concepts originally employed for the 1986 policy. It is about the re-evaluation, indeed the assurance, of the value of the idea that compulsory education has to be free to the public, the cost of which is to be borne by the state. Educational policy does not merely rest on the issue of choice of the associated political concepts; it is also about the action on the concepts chosen, combined with its viability and legitimacy. With the political concepts of equity and justice becoming the core concepts of the CCP ideology in the Hu era, eradication of the urban-rural differential becomes more possible.

The new initiative becomes meaningful because, firstly, it reduces the financial

⁵⁶² Ibid.

⁵⁶³ Freedon, M. (1996) *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, U.K., p.31.

burden of the cost of compulsory education on rural families. Secondly, for rural schools, there is an assurance that there will be an input of public resources. This increase in assurance is realised by raising the level of funding. The central government participates in the input of funding for public expenses for compulsory education. Thirdly, there is a realisation from the part of the central government that it had not shared its responsibility in the past. Under the new initiative, the central government expresses its understanding of the lack of clear responsibility, of various levels of government, on funding input for rural compulsory education in the past. There had been an obvious contradiction between the demand and provision of funding. The irrational allocation of educational resources, resulting in a heavy burden for rural students and households, is now recognised. Realising these, central government is now attempting to resolve the problem of the input of funding and sees the measure as having an immediate effect, as well as far-reaching historical meaning. From the position on cost sharing, the central government has moved from a stage in which it shared virtually nothing to a stage in which it shares responsively. This is a big improvement which has had a real effect on the dynamics of rural education. As an example, starting from 2007, the charity organisation, on which I serve, began to see a reducing need for scholarships for primary and junior secondary

students. Charity resources instead are re-allocated towards students at higher grades, including university students, of rural origin.

Political concepts that shape and become part of the framework of ideologies are “located in very specific historical and social circumstance”,⁵⁶⁴ they are “presented epistemologically as time and space bound.”⁵⁶⁵ Political concepts of equity and justice of Hu’s time perform the function of constructing social reality of his time. Hu’s CCP, again acting in its capacity as “ideological state apparatus”, realises that inequity of educational resource allocation is a major source of social inequity. This becomes acute when the PRC is attempting to transform China into a knowledge-based society and, at the same time, preparing her to take up a greater role in the world. There is a need to take special care of the condition of education for under-privileged groups in the society.

From a macro perspective, the beneficiaries of compulsory education do not only consist of the individuals who are supposed to be under the compulsory education scheme—those being educated, but should also include the under-privileged

⁵⁶⁴ Freeden, M. (1996) *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, U.K., p.31.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

organisation—the rural schools under the dualistic urban-rural society. The framework of important educational policy requires balance in two perspectives: the perspective of the interest of the government and the public as well as the interest of the school. Taking this to the context of the PRC, in considering the (in)equity issues of compulsory education, both the under-privileged schools and under-privileged individuals are taken into consideration. Enhancement of the schools in fact is the improvement of the conditions of education for those who receive it, the under-privileged students. The reduction or elimination of fees levied on rural students is a fundamental means of minimising inequity for students in rural areas. The “two exemptions and one subsidy” policy is an effective way to reduce the effect of urban-rural dualism. In the competitive environment among urban-rural interested parties of compulsory education, rural schools for compulsory education belong to the absolute “under-privileged”. If it was not for the pursuit of equity and justice to build up a ‘harmonious society’, rural students of the PRC would continue to be vulnerable. Harmonism functions to save the rural basic education system from acting continuously as a reproductive machine for turning out under-privileged groups.

It is a good sign that the situation has been improved. There is however a need for extra resources to go to rural education provision because of its historical disadvantage. To achieve equity requires a positive discrimination of resources toward these areas. Even if the discourse of harmonism is more likely to result in sufficient rural educational provision, unless it is also accompanied by extra resourcing, inequity will still occur. At the same time, urban-rural dualism continues to exist under a highly imposed system with a “city-centred” value-orientation that structurally frames the urban-rural difference. While harmony is high on the political agenda, many see it as rhetorical. Transition to a harmonious political system is going to be exceptionally difficult in the PRC. The discourse of harmonism is no panacea to the complexity of the Chinese political arena. The central government continues to tolerate local deviation and discretion so long as aggregate economic growth is achieved. Whichever indications of public conflict or open adversarial relationships are likely to be unsettling. At the time of finalising this thesis, television news was still reporting sporadic riots caused by urban-rural tension. This is related to national public policy that is biased towards benefitting city dwellers. This includes social welfare such as the supply of food, job opportunities, medical services, housing and labour insurance. Education, being for the public good,

especially compulsory education, is an important element of social welfare, and is continuously led by the “city with priority” value orientation. Harmonism as a “truth” is not totally “true”. To master it, to generate a useful “truth” out of it, there is a need to seek to identify, describe and analyse the web of discourses that constitute it together with the relationships among them.

6.9 Conclusion

Although the new “truth(s)” of Hu has links with Marxism, it would be an impossible construction without a whole collection of concepts directly or indirectly connected to the political thoughts of ancient China and situating the leadership within a heritage which has been defined and described by Confucius and other prominent thinkers of the past. Chinese traditional political concepts may appear to many people too distant from the tenets of Marxism. Yet, for the Chinese leaders whose comprehension of dialectics is focused on “relationships and change in and among all things in a manifold, complex, and diverse world”,⁵⁶⁶ there are synergies to be discovered between the ancient east and the recent west. From the perspectives of Communist Chinese dialecticians, agreement and disagreement are always

⁵⁶⁶ Tian, C. (2005) *Chinese Dialectics: From Yijing to Marxism*. Lexington Books: Lanham, Maryland., p.13.

correlative and so are “whole” and “part”; unity is comprehended as “coexistence, or mutual becoming, or complementarily between any two independent things.”⁵⁶⁷

While some people may see global Marxism, having originated from the West, as independent of oriental Chinese traditional concepts, Hu and his team are innovative enough to establish a relationship between them, despite the existence of difference.

Communist Chinese has learnt from Mao the universality of contradiction that “contradiction is present in all process of objectively existing things and of subjective thought and permeates all these process from beginning to end.”⁵⁶⁸ It is part of the progress of all things and is associated with things that are closely connected and yet basically different from each other. The unique point of interest is that it is not merely the difference but the connection that allows the formation of a contradiction. Chinese dialectics is able to uncover the interaction of complementary opposition, to establish the linkage of things or events of which the relationship itself makes sense of “unity” and to expose the nature and characteristics of “unity and contradiction” of a particular case⁵⁶⁹. Similar to Mao, Hu has learnt the importance of “making foreign thing serve China and making the past serve the present.”⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁸ Mao, Zedong (1971) “On Contradiction” in *Selected Readings From the Works of Mao Tzetung*. Foreign Languages Press: Peking, PRC., p.128.

⁵⁶⁹ Tian, C. (2005) *Chinese Dialectics: From Yijing to Marxism*. Lexington Books: Lanham, Maryland., p.13-14.

⁵⁷⁰ Quoted in Tang, Z. and Zuo, B. (1996) *Maoism and Chinese Culture*. Nova Science Publishers: New York, N.Y. p.473.

For an ideology to continue its legitimising function, flexibility is considered to be a critical factor.⁵⁷¹ Flexibility is reflected “in the logic of the ideology itself and in the way in which it relates, or does not relate, to the ideologies of other groups.”⁵⁷² In Hu’s case, the CCP is in need of securing support from the masses through ensuring the appeal of Marxism in China. Hu’s dialectical endeavour enables him to assemble a renewed set of concepts and logics for Chinese Marxism. It is arranged in a way that is related to traditional Chinese political and social concepts which are embedded in the people, in the Chinese culture. By doing so, attempts are made for Chinese Marxism to acquire a new affinity to the people. By re-configuring a Euro-centric Marxism with Chinese concepts, Hu enriches the ideology to become more inclusive and permits it to be “able to form alliance with others”⁵⁷³; therefore strengthening its position in seeking legitimacy. By not insisting on ideological dogma, Hu is able to activate its political manoeuvrability by incorporating a particular form of ideological adaption and compromise that is optimum to his political arena. In the progress of Marxism, Hu understands, there exists a contradiction between “global Marxism” and “localised” Marxism and, at the same time, the unity of “global Marxism” and “localised” Marxism. By formulating a

⁵⁷¹ Salter, B. (1981) *Education, Politics and the State*. Grant McIntype: London, England.,p.62

⁵⁷² Ibid.

⁵⁷³ Ibid.

particular mode of adaption and compromise, “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics” is ensured and indeed is in accordance with the theory of the progress of Marxism.

As is argued earlier in this chapter, Hu’s ideological dialectics has allowed him to formulate his “truth” closer to the tenets of Marxism. Hu is convinced that one of the key elements for his legitimacy is adherence to the core tenets of Marxism. He knows too well that for a Marxist, equity is a fundamental value. Social equity, whether in its absolute sense or relative character, is essential to enhancing social cohesion, establishing justice and nurturing freedom. The attention given to compulsory education in the era of Hu and the changes associated with it did not happen in a vacuum. One cannot just assume changes occur only because of the presence of dynamics. For changes to occur, there must be a framework that outlines the form of its emergences.⁵⁷⁴ This framework is a set of values, ideas and beliefs which assemble to form an ideology that performs the function of legitimacy and guides specific actions. With its transformational nature, ideology is a carrier of change⁵⁷⁵. Ideology does not exist naturally but “is invented, used, abused, adapted,

⁵⁷⁴ Salter, B. (1981) *Education, Politics and the State*. Grant McIntype: London, England.,p.50.

⁵⁷⁵ See “Carrier of Change” in Heller, M. (2009) *Capitalism, Institutions, and Economic Development*. Routledge: Abindon, Oxon.,p.153-198.

reconstituted, and superseded.”⁵⁷⁶ What will follow in the concluding chapter, is a discussion of the continuum of the ideological dialectics of Mao, Deng, Jiang and Hu.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., p.156.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

Socio-political contradiction betrays people's vision of social equity, as Freire reveals.⁵⁷⁷ In order to solve an educational problem, educators must first comprehensively and historically situate the problem—that is, confront the problem. There is a need to seek answers within the historical realm of economic, social and political systems so that we may appreciate the dynamics that give rise to the existing humanity. This study has revealed that there are discriminatory ideological discourses relating to Chinese policies and practices. They include Mao's revolution-led proletarianism and Deng's modernisation-led economism which affect rural students' experience of compulsory schooling at the primary stage of socialism in the PRC, resulting in various degrees of inequity of educational access, participation, attainment and life chances. In a nutshell, the purpose of education in Mao's time was not to give students knowledge for future life development in the normal sense but was to mould a red proletariat, of a revolutionary nature, for the nation. Equity of educational provision was reflected in arranging for everyone to learn the new Maoist communism but was not realised in schooling. In Deng's era, rural educational inequity was structurally legitimated by reference to a variety of

⁵⁷⁷ Freire, P. (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Seabury Press: New York, N.Y..

ideological discourses, which attempted to explain the necessity of the practice of inequity.

Educational (in)equity is a reality, a practice, a discourse and a “truth”. It is part of the “rationality of governmental practice in the exercise of political sovereignty.”⁵⁷⁸ It may be considered as a universal subject because virtually all students in every society are stratified to some extent as a result of the existence of norms and sanctions; yet it experiences its historical specificity in the PRC. Educational (in)equity is legitimated by reference to a variety of ideological systems, one of the functions of which is to explain and interpret the necessity and legitimacy of (in)equity. It does not exist on its own but is relational to other ideo-political discourses contingent at any given time and space.

Political discourses are not constructed and applied in a vacuum; they are related to the political advancement of a country and are stimulated by the pace of its developments. Discourses or concepts within an ideology are, by their nature, re-configured or re-directed under a particular political or social circumstance. At the

⁵⁷⁸ Foucault, M. (2008) *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France 1978-79*. Palgrave: New York, N.Y., p.2.

same time, there are “rules” of discourse which include political, social and cultural constraints working on ideological interpretation. The approach of various CCP leaderships to the different discourses of Marxism does not start from the discourse itself but begins with their inter-related totality (or as much as they are able to comprehend). A dialectical approach enables them to systematise and make sense of the many issues they encounter in the political arena. It focuses on the relationship of an issue / an occurrence to other issues / occurrences. The existence of an issue/ an occurrence is perceived as hinging on this relationship with others and how this relationship is adjusted and transformed. This is historical and developmental in nature.

Consequence of changing ideo-political discourse on educational (in)equity

In the dialectical venture, Chinese Communist leaders have initiated the selection of the relevant discourses within Marxism-Leninism at different stages of history for the construction of a “localised” Chinese Marxism which is credited as an innovative theorisation in the advancement of Marxism, a universally valid revolutionary theory. The consequence of the orientation and re-orientation of the ideo-political discourses on rural educational (in)equity is summarised in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1

Leadership	Official Ideology	Articulating Political Discourse as an outcome of dialectical venture	Impact on Rural Compulsory Education
Mao Zedong	Mao Zedong Thought	Revolutionism, Contradiction, Class struggle and Proletarian dictatorship	Equity of compulsory education is “proletarianised”
Deng Xiaoping	Deng Xiaoping Theory	Modernism, economism, urban-prioritised	Equity being subordinated, Insufficient Funding
Jiang Zemin	Theory of “Three Represents”	Boosting of the advancement (the superiority) of the CCP	Buffer
Hu Jintao	Harmonism and Scientific Developmentalism	Equity and Social Justice	Equity emerging as a driving force, redirects government resources to rural compulsory education

These articulating political discourses are not formed randomly but, as Crowther informs us, are determined according to the “rules” through which “ways of knowing”

in discourses are constructed.⁵⁷⁹ These “rules of the discourse” not only enable the generation of knowledge “but also exclude and limit what is known.”⁵⁸⁰ Taking Crowther’s idea further, it is observed that in relation to rural educational provision, the rules of Mao’s revolution-led proletarianism include: i) “proletarianisation” is “good”, indeed “the best”, for the country and for the individual, ii) “everyone to become proletariat” equals or is better than “everyone to receive compulsory education in basic schooling, iii) learning Marxist philosophy and Maoist slogans (discourse in nature) are more important than learning literature and scientific knowledge and iv) there are barriers to “proletarianisation”,⁵⁸¹ but these will be overcome. These “rules” have paradoxically framed a structure which overshadows, and in effect excludes, the idea of sufficient educational provision for rural students, ending up in rural students being deprived of quality education.

As has been revealed in this study, in the Deng era, Mao’s discourse of proletarianism, which was once recognised as knowledge/truth, serving to preserve the party and have beneficially accrued legitimacy, is found to be a mistake and has to be ruled out. Another “ways of knowing” in discourse has to be constructed by a

⁵⁷⁹ Crowther, J. (2000) “Participation in adult and community education: a discourse of diminishing returns”. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*. Vol.19, No.6, pp.479-492.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁸¹ The numbers do not suggest they are hierarchically ordered.

new set of rules. The previous ones are “no longer perceived, described, expressed, characterised, classified, and known in the same way.”⁵⁸² As soon as the discourse of proletarianism lost “truth” as an innate property, its power was lost. This new set of rules for modernism and economism include: i) modernisation associated with economic growth is “good”; it is part of the superiority of socialism ii) prosperity equals socialism which eventually leads to communism, iii) it is inevitable to allow inequity to exist (let some people, especially the urban dwellers, get rich first) at the initial stage of Chinese socialism and iv) barriers to modernisation and economic growth exist; the outcome, the truth, is to be verified by practices. By including the idea that urban dwellers get priority for resourcing, proper rural educational provision is excluded. An urban bias is put in place which deprives rural students of sufficient funding for proper schooling.

So is Deng’s modernisation-led economism, in the 21st century, when their truthfulness is questioned and replaced by “harmonism”, a discourse to consolidate social cohesion? At the very least, the pursuit of knowledge/truth should serve the will to enhance legitimacy, to maintain power and to appropriate. Seen from this

⁵⁸² Foucault, M. (1994) *The Order of Things: an archaeology of the human science*. Vintage: New York, N.Y., p.217.

perspective, there is not a gradual progression towards truth but an account of the construction of previous errors at any given period of time. As the rules of Deng's modernism and economism fade Hu's set of rules of harmonism enter. They include: i) harmony is "good" for the individual and the country, as well as "good" for the whole world, ii) harmony equates to socialism which eventually leads to the realisation of full humanity—a Confucian da-tong/communist society, iii) the practice of justice, equity, fairness for the individual and all citizens and iv) conflicts are minimised. Hu's dialectical endeavour of constructing the "truth" of harmonism and scientific developmentalism enables more appropriate measures to be introduced to address the issue of inequity of rural compulsory education. Hu's "truth", with its respective ideological discourses, works to rule out the unfavourable elements of the rural compulsory education system, which continue to reproduce an under-privileged layer of society. There is, at least, reduction in inequity.

This study has revealed the process of socio-political construction upon which social reality depends, as created via discourse. It has also helped us to understand the shaping and re-shaping relationship of discourse-ideology. Discourses within an ideological web shape perceptions of reality and truth. Reality turns into whatever

the ideological web permits it to be. A shift of the dialectics has allowed an equitable framework for rural compulsory education starting from the beginning of the 21st century. There has been repeated repositioning of the priorities of the socio-political and economic agenda and objectives. This repositioning is manifested by the outcome of ideological dialectics which guides the leading logic of decision making by the leaders for educational policies; and at the initial stage of Chinese socialism is tensioned between a socialist equitarian paradigm and a capitalist competitive paradigm. Ideological pursuit, political agenda and educational initiatives form an interlinked web.

By making use of Levin's model of evaluation, this study has enabled us to view the particular aspects of educational inequity which occur and are addressed in various periods. Mao's authorship of revolution-led proletarianism constructed a "truth" in which struggle and proletarian dictatorship took precedence over equity. Under new political priorities and ideological transformation, new discursive practices were generated. Equal educational access was enhanced under the banner of "everyone to becoming proletarian". Ironically, this turned out to be a starting point for inequity of educational access, particularly in the period of the Cultural

Revolution in which education was extremely politicised. Those children, and/or family members, who were identified as “anti-revolutionary” or “not-for-revolution” were deprived of opportunities for schooling. Equity of educational participation was hindered, as revealed by the sub-standard academic content and the deteriorated conditions of teaching. Political loyalty to the CCP, not only of the students but also of family members, became a key criterion for assessment, leading to educational attainment inequity and subsequently extending into the inequity effect of life chances because of the reinforcing effect of political status.

Deng’s era was dominated by discourses of modernism and economism, accompanied by the outcome of material prosperity. While educational equity was rhetorically addressed, rural educational inequity was structurally legitimised. Inequity of educational access increased as inland rural villages were left in extreme poverty. Sending children to attend school became unaffordable for rural households. Out-dated and ruined teaching facilities and sub-standard teachers became a persistent reality as a result of the funding bias which favoured urban, areas contributing to the low quality of rural education. Eventually, rural children were kept away from higher education and higher paid jobs, extending the inequity of life

chances.

Hu's construction of harmonism directed governmental practices towards the abolition of, or at least the minimisation of, educational inequity. The incorporation of effective measures, which included the initiative of "two exemptions and one subsidy" and "Assured Funding Mechanism" for rural compulsory education, made basic education affordable for rural households and improved the quality of rural education so that rural students were more able to have comparable educational attainment to urban students, gaining more chances for higher education and hence the ability to move up the social ladder. All in all, there was an improvement in equity of educational access, participation, attainment and life chances.

Reason for persistent rural educational inequity

Why is it that after decades of effort, problems in rural education persist? The governmental rationality approach enables us to conclude that the persistence of the problem of rural educational inequity endures because it has been rationalised by the "truths", generated by the CCP as an "ideological state apparatus", of Mao's revolution-led proletarianism and Deng's modernism and economism. The meaning

of these “truths”, or the interpretation of them, has overshadowed the value of educational equity. These “truths” are reflected in norms governing the practices of the government. These masks of “truth”, as a consequence of the orientation and re-orientation of ideo-political discourses betray social justice and hence have the consequence of rural educational inequity. As government rationality shifts to the “truth” of harmonism, as a distinct ideological and cultural framing for social cohesion, with a grafting of Confucianism onto Marxism through the CCP’s global-local dialectic, the problematic of rural educational inequity has become more visibly addressed.

The related socio-political dynamics and changing ideo-political discourses: consequences on rural educational inequity

There are socio-political dynamics and ideological tensions relating to the persistence of rural educational inequity. Marxism, with a promise and vision of global victory of communism as the ontological view of the world, carries the function of “truth”, the rationale, it had when it first entered in China. It acts in “a body of knowledge”⁵⁸³ and initially it is in the form of Marxist dogmatic and mechanistic science. The dominant discourse is masked as a “universal truth” and a

⁵⁸³ Foucault, M. (1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith., Tavistock Publications: London, England., p.205.

teleological science of history with a positivistic nature. Simultaneously, there is the conviction of the veteran revolutionaries who are deeply rooted in the issues that inspired their quest for the Chinese Revolution in the first place. Marxism and socialism are not only ideological “truths” for the pursuit of wealth and power; they are however related to the fundamental questions of the type of modern state which should be established and the ways and means of achieving it. The tension comes from the continued search for guiding values for China, its route of modernisation, and the particular form of society desired.

As was the case in Deng’s era, international and domestic pressures of the demands of modernisation comprise the normative goals, including equity, of Marxism, even if temporarily. Under the existing material conditions of the PRC in the primary stage of Chinese socialism, the ideology of socialism can only appeal to the masses if it has the material goal of enriching the Chinese general public; leaving the ideal of social equity and the total development of the human individual aside. Changes from within and from others parts of the globe (particularly the U.S.A and the former U.S.S.R) intensify the realisation of the break between “universal truth” and reality. In other words, what were undermined previously were the notions of

social complexity and causal contingency. Arguments become augmented to realise the historical and socio-political forces constituting phenomena. The importance of historical specificity emerges while simultaneously significant lines of historical continuity are understood, bearing in mind that attempts to maintain the basic tenets of Marxism have traditionally functioned to legitimise the CCP's position.

Gradually, the communist Chinese leadership is attempting to minimise idealist theories that view history as the expression of universal essences.⁵⁸⁴ Arguably, Chinese leaders endeavour to clarify the nature of their respective historical eras, to underline the fundamental differences from preceding eras, and to reveal that, in their respective ages, contemporary forms of knowledge, rationality, social institutions, and subjectivity are contingent socio-political historical events. This is important because a fragile ideological standing would minimise a powerful means of legitimisation in the ideologically conscious political arena of China. In other words, the construction of a sturdy ideological backing provides legitimacy for survival. They are hence subject to re-configuration and changes. There is a need "to produce

⁵⁸⁴ Mao criticised the idealist concept of history even before the establishment of the PRC. See "The bankruptcy of the idealist conception of history" (Sept 1949) in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (3rd ed.) (1969) Vol. IV. Foreign Languages Press: Peking, China., pp.451-459.

a shift in thought so that things can really change.”⁵⁸⁵ They attempt to generate discourses of which the task is “to make differences: to constitute them as objects, to analyse them and to define their concepts.”⁵⁸⁶ Simply put, there is a continuous process of affirmation, re-conceptualising and re-evaluation of Marxism and socialism and the relationship with capitalism and other political ideologies. They do not break up previous discourses into a random, disorganised flux without any order, format, or intelligibility. Instead they are reconstructed in a more concrete and differentiated form. They attempt to posit ideo-political discourses in their actual complexity and heterogeneity, yet they find an underlying unity of different groups of statement.

At any given time, discourse carries a synchronic coherence which permits the CCP to identify acceptable governmental rationality and formulate their governing practices. As an ideological state apparatus, the CCP realises that the coherence of discourse should not be instituted at the shell-level of concepts or themes since analogous concepts and themes can be informed by quite different suppositions. Changes in configuration of knowledge do not entail a gradual and steady build-up of

⁵⁸⁵ As quoted in Farrell, C. (1989) *Foucault: Historian or Philosopher?*. Macmillan: Basingstoke., p.39.

⁵⁸⁶ Foucault, M. (1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith., Tavistock Publications: London, England., p.205.

knowledge or formatted progress of “truth”. Rather, in a transition from one “discursive formation” or historical era to another, “things are no longer perceived, described, expressed, characterised, classified, and known in the same way”⁵⁸⁷—as has been demonstrated in the changes of discourses in the Mao, Deng, Jiang and Hu eras. The greater multiplicity faced, in reality, places a strain on political ideals between various ideo-political discourses and on deciding which one(s) warrant attention. There is the need to address the problematic of the reasons for, the contents of and/or the means of discussing the plurality of conflicting “truths” in the political arena. In its truth-seeking endeavours, the CCP affirms China’s contingency via the dialectic of globalism-localism; at the same time, gaining knowledge/power to interpret it through engaging in the socio- specific practices (locality).

As this proceeds, the CCP attempts to generate a discourse, a “truth”, of which there does not exist *a priori* interpretation that prevalent Chinese phenomena must conform to. To them, some “truths” that appeal to the masses are best interpreted in ideological discourses. Depending on the “truths” that are encountered, various onto-political and onto-ethical stances may be adopted, including those that

⁵⁸⁷ Foucault, M. (1994) *The Order of Things: an archaeology of the human sciences*. Vintage: New York, N.Y., p.217.

previously the Chinese communist would have resisted.

There are different domains of knowledge/truth and practice that constrain the formulation of policies and how they can be transformed by alternative forms of knowledge/truth. In this study, an attempt has been made to reveal how different “regimes of truth” and practices constrain leaders’ actions and how they are re-configured by alternative discourses and practices. It is seen as a change from the pre-determined socio-political rationality, transgressing the limits of experience and transvaluing “truths” to promote their own creative leadership style and affirm their legitimacy, endlessly creating and recreating the CCP as an “ideological state apparatus”. Arguably, these “regimes of truth” are constructed via a prevalent global-local dialectics, as a way of thinking to justify Marxism with Chinese characteristics, and then, as the Chinese leaders alter their position, extended to legitimate the various “truths” about educational (in)equity.

Changing ideological dialectics and interactions of discourses

One of the tasks of Communist Chinese leaders is to ensure the official ideology makes sense of the reality around the people of China. Official ideology has to

change with the times and to keep up with new situations, new technologies and new forms of socio-political relations. The official ideology is judged by its ability to deal with transforming socio-political structures, locally and globally and with technological advancement. In other words, it is how well the official ideology and the articulation of ideological discourses within it accurately address reality. At the primary stage of Chinese Socialism, new relations, new ways of organising the state did not come out of nothing. They were made possible within the existing ideological framework. Ideology provides the atmosphere for socio-political activities, as Althusser maintains. Ideology helps Chinese leaders make sense of the world, globally and locally, by providing the framework through which they act. Chinese Marxism, in its various configurations at different stages, shapes the actions of the leaders. At the same time, through their actions, discourses of the official ideology are also re-configured and re-shaped. This enables a loop feedback relationship that is difficult to extricate. Criteria of truth and falsity in fact, are not objective but dialectical as a result of different interpretations of orthodox Marxism at different stages. Indeed, ideologies act as intellectual tools in political endeavours. To be serviceable, they have to comply with particular intellectual frameworks and ways of thinking.

When Chinese leaders experience a particular socio-political situation as problematic or when existing discourses seem weak or inadequate, the circumstances become right for the creation of a new set of ideological discourses, a new “regime of truth”. A necessary condition for the ascent of a re-configuration of discourses within an existing “regime of truth” is the concurrent existence of a problematic and the absence of a set of discourses to serve as guidelines for action. When the CCP experiences a problematic in its situation and finds the available sets of ideological discourses to be lacking, inadequate or not strong enough for initiating actions, it considers the situation as an opportunity to create a new “truth”. By doing so, the CCP enables people to define and redefine the nature of the problematic, to realise the failure of the existing set of discourses for actions and, most importantly, to buy into the usefulness of the new.

Similar to the study of capitalist globalisation, a dichotomous perspective of the effect of globalisation of Marxism might miss the significant dynamics that occur in both the global and local dimensions. To counteract challenges associated with the incoming ideology, local regimes strive to come up with initiatives to re-configure the incoming ideology and to reshape themselves including their identities.

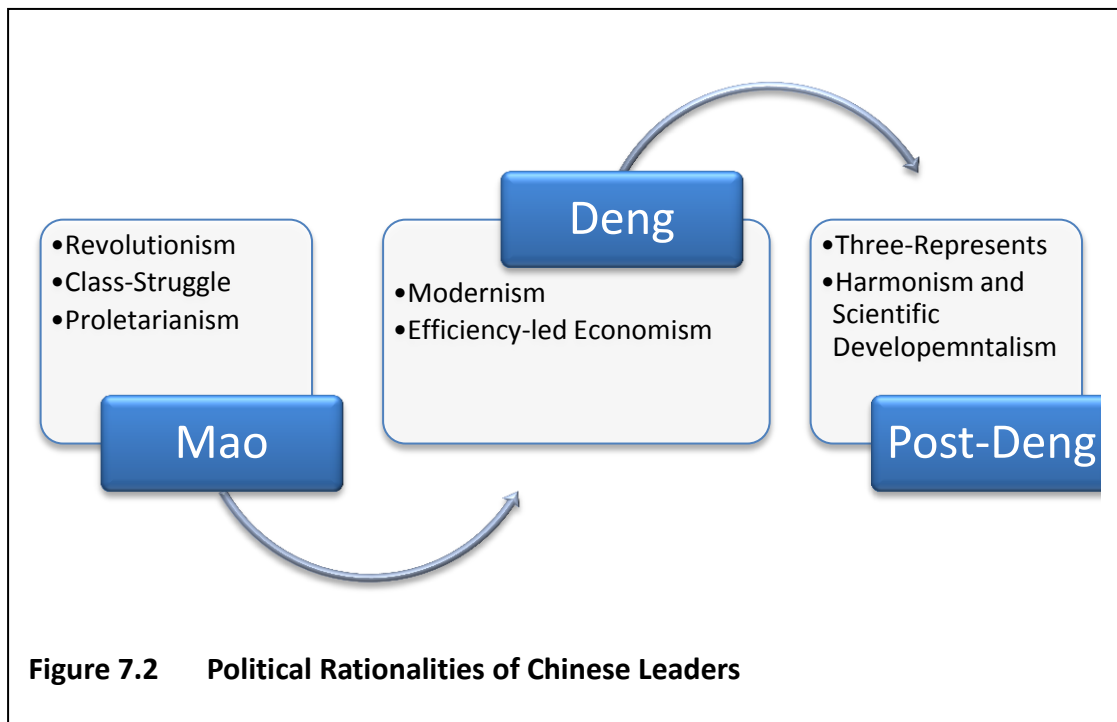
Ideological dialectics of Marxist globalism and localism has successfully shaped the core ideologies of the various phases at the primary stage of Chinese socialism. CCP leaders, including Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, have made use of this mode of ideological dialectics in executing their leadership in politics. Their dialectical initiatives have enabled them to seek political power and continue the legitimacy of the regime. The relationship of globalism and localism is a dialectical unity. CCP leaders realise that it is not appropriate to emphasise localism and to underplay globalism, nor is it appropriate to emphasise globalism and to underplay localism. Under the influence of Marxist dialectical materialism, the approach of the CCP, in establishing its ideological power of governance, is to achieve an appropriate dynamics of both. CCP leaders are aware that some of the discourses belonging to the very core of socialist tradition conflict with each other. Indeed, some of “the values of socialism, like those of other ideologies, may come into conflict at the conceptual level long before they are put into practice.”⁵⁸⁸ In the course of the primary stage of Chinese Socialism, CCP leaders came to realise that there was no innate harmony, authentic or potential, among core socialist discourses. There was however dialectical harmony, which was attained due to the effects of

⁵⁸⁸ Freedman, M. (1996) *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, U.K., p.417.

certain adjoining and peripheral discourses, elected “to contain its endemic tensions.”⁵⁸⁹

This research has enabled us to view the ideological dialectics of Chinese leaders. Mao’s revolution-led proletarianism, Deng’s modernism and economism, and Hu’s humanist harmonism are each grounded in their respective ways of envisaging the variety and nature of problems that can and must be addressed through dialectical ventures. Mao’s focus on revolution-led proletarianism and class struggle via mobilisation of the masses against “class-enemies” had out-lived its purpose in Deng’s era. Similarly, the dialectical endeavour of Hu Jintao allowed him to conclude that Deng’s modernisation-led economism was no longer totally valid at the beginning of the 21st century. There was less need for forceful policing and governmental controls over all aspects of political, social, economic and cultural life. Each of the Chinese leaders has formulated their own political rationalities and established their own estimation and optimisation of the dynamics needed for governing the country (see Figure 7.2 of next page).

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.



Comparatively, Hu's dialectical venture is a more localised endeavour than that of Mao and Deng since it is more linked to traditional Chinese discourses. Hu's re-configuration of the official ideology is an attempt to incorporate elements of high affinity to the Chinese as a nation. It is a reconstruction of global Marxism with local Chinese Confucianism. The Confucian concept of society advances a multi-faceted state embracing people of different abilities, capacities and visions. This multiplicity and order of society sustains harmonious relationships through a co-ordinated ethic-social setting of rigorous self-discipline of individuals. At the same time, it is a society in which harmony is maintained through training people from their childhood

to cultivate virtues of brotherly obedience and filial piety—virtues that are less likely to lead to rebellious tendencies in later life. The internalisation of the necessary attitude of deference means that, politically, there will be little instability arising from people who may be disgruntled. In the Confucian sense, a harmonious society is not about same-ness; it is a co-ordinated attempt in which “the virtuous people seek to be harmonious (*he*) but does not attempt to be the same” (Analects 13:23). Harmonism is not about things remaining static. A Chinese harmonious society is founded on dialectical harmony that draws attention to the dynamic of interpersonal and interdependent relationships. It is one that “recognizes the world as a harmony or a harmonizing process in which all differences and conflicts among things have no ontological ultimacy but serve the purpose for completing a state of harmony of multitudinous life or for bringing forth a multitude of life in the creative momentum of the changing reality.”⁵⁹⁰ In connecting the Marxist world-view with the traditional world-view, Hu’s harmonism is structured, on the one hand, to give due respect to the traditional doctrines of Chinese Communism as a continuum and, on the other hand, to stress the organic and ever-innovative nature of the CCP ideology. The dynamic and vitality of the ideology is hence accentuated. Depicted in a dialectical

⁵⁹⁰Cheng, C. (1977) “Toward Constructing a Dialectics of Harmonization: Harmony and Conflict in Chinese Philosophy” in *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*. Vol.4, pp.209-245.

perspective, the fundamental ideas of the theory of the CCP are maintained through an on-going adaption and alignment with the local reality of the time.

To conclude

Attempts have been made to identify and clarify the nature of the discursive practices that occurred in the periods identified above rather than to evaluate them as Marxist, post-Marxist or some strain of capitalism. While these periods may reflect greater or lesser continuities with “pure” Marxist thinking, the important issue is the continued relevance of Marxism at a “practical” ideological level in Chinese society. In this sense, Marxism continues to provide a powerful vocabulary and is a legitimating force in policy terms. The concern of this study is to show how this thinking, related to global-local problems and solutions, has consequences for rural educational inequity. It is interesting to note that current phase of “harmonism” has at least, had some positive consequences in terms of the resourcing of rural education provision. Equity and justice as discourses continue to serve political ends. They are ideological constructs, the emphasis of which generates equitable measures. It is hoped the “truths” that have been constructed to govern will be able to serve the interests of all equally.

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